

LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 134.—VOL. VI.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 2, 1865.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[TOOKS ANNOUNCES AN UNPLEASANT VISITOR.]

THE BELLE OF THE SEASON.

By W. E. CHADWICK.

CHAPTER XVI.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

Hamlet.

WALTER LORRAINE had traversed half the distance between the mansion of Rock Land and his tent when he paused and looked back at the edifice which contained the being more precious to him than his own soul. A curtain seemed to have been drawn across the windows, but a faint light found its way to the outside, and he concluded that the Lady Geraldine had not yet retired. Even while he gazed upon her windows the light faded, and he murmured:

"She has retired! May she dream of me! Would that in her dream might be revealed to her something of the great love I bear her!"

Continuing his way, he soon reached his tent. The strip of canvas that officiated as a door was waving idly to and fro in the breeze, it not having been completely buttoned. Raising it, the artist passed into the tent.

In his present happy state of mind, he did not fail to notice the care and pains which Parkin had lavished upon the little apartment. The water-proof canvas that composed the floor was spread upon a springy turf, and yielded to the pressure of the foot as though it had been an Eastern carpet. The little folding bedstead was ready for his occupancy, and looked very inviting. The easel stood in one corner, and upon it hung a lighted lantern. Parkin himself lay in a blanket, deep in the enjoyment of his well-deserved slumbers.

Attractive, however, as was the little tent, Walter felt too joyous and restless for sleep, and he noiselessly made his way out of it again and seated himself upon a rock.

The glorious moonlight and the uneasy sea seemed to have new charms for him, but his gaze rested

most frequently upon the grim old mansion of Rock Land.

It was outlined against the sky like some feudal keep of a warlike age, with the waves lashing against the base of the rock on which it stood, and seemed a strong, rough casket for the beautiful jewel it contained in the form of the Lady Geraldine.

While Walter gazed with a lover's eyes at Geraldine's windows, a form crept among the rocks near him, and watched him for a few moments in silence.

"He looks good and true," whispered a broken voice, as if its owner were communing with himself. "Can I trust him?"

Slight as was the noise made by the intruder, Walter heard it and looked around him.

A moment passed, as if the stranger were irresolute, and then he arose to his feet, passed swiftly to Walter's side, exclaiming imploringly:

"Do not be frightened, sir. I beg you not to betray me. Have pity on me. Help me!"

The artist regarded the intruder with astonishment.

As revealed by the moonlight, he was a man somewhat past middle age, with a haggard countenance, on which was set the seal of deep grief, and with a nervous and frightened manner. His hair was of a deep iron-grey and shaded a broad high brow, under which shone a pair of eyes whose chief expression was despair.

Despite his clothing, which was poor and worn, it was easy to see that he was a gentleman.

His voice showed culture and refinement as truly as it showed a state of mental torture; and Walter instantly conceived an involuntary respect and pity for him.

"How can I assist you, sir?" he responded, gently and reassuringly.

"You will assist me, then?" cried the stranger. "I am faint for want of food. Give me something to eat and drink!"

As the stranger, in prayer, he sank down upon the rocks.

The spectacle thus presented, the artist, who had been so long absent, and brought back with

him a basket of food and a bottle of wine, which he pressed upon the stranger.

Without waiting to thank him, the object of his kindness seized the cold meat and bread, and ate it ravenously, and drank freely of the wine.

"You are very kind, sir!" he said, as soon as he had satisfied his great hunger. "Yours are the first kind words I have heard for years!"

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, it is true. I have suffered a martyrdom. My enemies may be even now upon my track," and he sprang up and looked about him with a startled air.

"Hark! Do you hear anything?"

Walter listened, and heard nothing but the waves beating against the rocks.

"No, I hear nothing," he replied. "Have no fears, sir, I will protect you!"

"Thanks, a thousand thanks for the assurance!" cried the stranger, sinking down again upon his former seat. "And yet I fear you cannot! If I should be retaken—"

He left the sentence unfinished, save by a horrible groan.

Walter was full of astonishment at the singular adventure that had befallen him, and wondered in his own mind whether the strange gentleman might not be a lunatic.

But one glance at his countenance dispelled that idea as quickly as it was formed.

"Tell me who you are, sir," he said, in his soothing tones. "Confide in me. I may be of some assistance to you. Who do you fear will retake you?"

The stranger hesitated, and glanced at the tent.

"Are we alone—quite alone?" he asked.

"Quite so. My servant is asleep in the tent, but he cannot hear a word spoken at this distance, with all the noise of the sea!"

The stranger, reassured on this point, gave Walter's face an earnest scrutiny, but, reading there only the tokens of a noble character, seemed to take courage, and said:

"I have been wandering about among these rocks for a day or two, with no food to eat, and nothing to

drink, except the stagnant water I found in pools in the rocks. I—you hear nothing?"

"Nothing—nothing whatever?"

"I have escaped from cruel enemies," continued the stranger, "enemies who have imprisoned me, and kept me in chains. Three days since I managed to break my chains and flee!"

"But why should your enemies chain and imprison you?" demanded Walter. "Surely, such things cannot be done in England!"

"They pretended that I am insane. I have been shut up in a private insane asylum for years—many years! So many are the years that long since I have ceased to count them! But all the while my enemy knew that I was as sane as he!"

Despite the wild manner of the stranger, Walter felt that he spoke truth—that he was perfectly sane!

"But who shut you up as insane?" he asked.

The stranger's face darkened, and his eyes flashed with emotion, as he responded:

"I cannot speak his name—not yet! He has usurped my place. He has given out that I am dead or insane, but I shall yet appear to an avenger!"

"But if you escaped three days since," questioned the artist, "why did you not hasten to confront your enemy and demand restitution and justice?"

"But I escaped in rags, and without money," replied the stranger, helplessly. "My keepers searched for me, of course, near my enemy. It was clearly my safest course to hide until the first search was past, and then make my appearance."

Walter seemed assent.

"Words would fail to describe to you the injuries I have received at the hands of my enemy," continued the stranger, mournfully. "Rank, wealth, an honorable name, all gone! And more than all, worse than all, my only child, my daughter, has been taught to look upon me as dead or a lunatic! Sometimes it comes so though I shall go mad!"

He pressed his hands over his eyes as if to shut out view of his misdeeds.

"Do not despair!" urged Walter, affected by the sorrow of his strange guest. "Live for revenge!"

"Revenge!" repeated the injured man. "Yes; the hope of thrusting the usurper from my place, and unmasking him in all his wickedness, is all that has kept me alive during these years of captivity. Look there!"

He folded back his ragged shaven and displayed a deep mark worn into his wrist.

"That is the mark made by the fetters I have worn for years, with but few intervals of relief from them," he said. "It was in one of those intervals I made my escape. You would not think me formidable, but wherever he is, I know that my enemy is sitting in deadly fear of my coming, for he must have heard of my escape. He dreads me more than death!"

"Then why did he not kill you?"

"Because he thought the cell of an insane asylum, with bolts, bars, chains, and fetters, and an assumed name, were an effectual grave for me. No one in England knows my story, and my keepers laugh in my face when I try to tell it to them!"

"Great heaven!" cried Walter. "Can such wrongs be perpetrated in our happy country? Can a gentleman be confined on a charge of lunacy by an enemy who usurps his place?"

"The wrong was not all done in England," said the stranger. "It began on the Continent. Besides my enemy, there is but one man in the world who knows my wrongs, and he was an accomplice in their perpetration!"

"But tell me what happened to you on the Continent," said the artist.

"Not yet! Ah, do you hear anything? I fear pursuit. I met several persons during my flight to the coast, and fear that I may be traced to my hiding-place."

"There is no one in the vicinity," returned Walter, "and if there were, I would defend you with my life!"

The stranger grasped the artist's hand with fervent gratitude and with tearful eyes.

"Tell me your name, sir," he said. "Tell me, that I may see you again when I shall have recovered my rights."

"My name is Walter Lorraine. I am an artist, and your friend. Command my services, sir, as you have my sympathy. If I can aid you—"

"Could you lend me sufficient money to get to London, sir?" asked his companion, hesitatingly.

Walter drew out his purse from his pocket, and having removed a small portion of its contents for his own immediate use, he placed the purse, containing the remainder, in the hands of the wronged man, answering:

"There is enough to take you to London, sir, and engage the services of one of the best lawyers to be found in the metropolis. I beg of you to be guarded in approaching your enemy. Consult a

lawyer, make known to him the whole story, and offer proofs of your identity. Then proceed to overwhelm the villain who has usurped your place."

"Heaven bless you, Mr. Lorraine. Your timely help has rescued me from absolute despair. I will act upon your advice this very day."

"Does this villain claim your name and title," asked Walter, "as yourself? Does he personate you?"

"No. He claims them as the next heir. He has held my place so many years that I may find it difficult to dispossess him, but I can soon prove my identity."

"If your daughter should recognize you, it would be the strongest proof you could have. Is she still living?"

"Alas! I know not!" groaned the stranger. "If she lives, she must be grown up, and entering upon womanhood. When I think of her I cannot restrain my impatience to ascertain if she is yet living, and if so, to reveal myself to her. I must hasten—"

He arose and looked about him with a wild and startled air, without waiting to finish his sentence.

"Before you go," said Walter, "you must allow me to offer you a change of clothing. Your pursuers can track you but too easily in your present suit. Come to my tent. My servant is sound asleep."

The stranger hesitated, but the offer and advice of the artist were too good to be rejected, and with many thanks, he accepted them.

Walter then led the way to his tent, his companion following, with many scrutinizing and suspicious glances at the neighbouring rocks, and they were soon within the little apartment.

"Sit down upon my bed, sir," said Walter, "while I get out your clothing. How fortunate that you are so nearly the same size as myself!"

The stranger smiled sadly.

Walter's form was naturally slender, although sufficiently well-developed about the chest, and he had a suppleness of flesh, but his companion's was naturally portly, though now gaunt and shrunken.

The artist unlocked his portmanteau, throwing out hose, linen, and every accessory of attire, and having laid them on the bed, he said:

"You can make your toilet at your leisure. My men stand very exactly a-brake, and you will find it impossible to escape me. While you dress yourself, however, I will go outside and watch. Should my eyes catch the vicinity, I will warn you."

Without heeding the fearful glances of his guest, the artist passed outside the tent, and began his self-imposed duty as sentinel.

His feelings had been deeply touched in favour of his guest. Although his heart was almost torn to pity and relieve the miseries of others, yet there was something about the object of his present benefactions that appealed to feelings deeper than pity. Strange as the fact may seem, he had already conceived a filial tenderness towards him. Despite the man's distressed appearance, there was a nobleness about his face that struck the artist as familiar, and it seemed to him as though he had somewhere seen those dark, piercing eyes before—but without their depths of gloom.

In vain he asked himself where.

He paced slowly around his tent, keeping a vigilant eye upon the rocks in front as well as the road behind, and meditating upon the singular history of his guest. At length, as he paused in front of the tent, the flap was gently lifted, and the stranger asked:

"Is it you, Mr. Lorraine?"

Walter replied in the affirmative.

"You see no one lurking about?"

"No one. We are the only persons in the vicinity."

As this assurance reached him, the stranger emerged from the tent fully clad in the artist's extra suit of clothing. It fitted him very well, owing to his gauntness, and he would have looked quite like another man had not his wildness of manner and ghastliness of visage been too apparent. He had combed his tangled beard and long locks, and Walter felt more than ever convinced that he had not done wrong in believing every word he had uttered—so greatly improved was his personal appearance, and so much more sane did he now look.

"A week ago, Mr. Lorraine," he said, in a voice broken by deep emotion, "nay, an hour ago, I hated mankind on account of the bitter wrongs and injuries I had received; but you have aroused anew my faith in my species, you have given me hope and encouragement to proceed in the unmasking of the villain who has robbed me of all that life held dear. I was hungry, ragged, and penniless. You have fed me, clothed me, and given me your purse. The time may come when I can express my gratitude to you in more fitting terms, and should the occasion ever arise, I would gladly lay down my life for your happiness."

Walter pressed his hand in silence.

The fugitive seemed overcome with his emotions,

and leaning on the artist, wept freely. The tears relieved the pressure on his heart and brain, and he soon said, more calmly:

"Pardon my weakness. These are the first tears I have shed for years. Wrong has failed to make me weak, but your kindness is so unexpected, so bounteous! I did not know that there was a man in the world who would do for a nameless fugitive what you have done for me!"

"There are very many, I trust," replied Walter. "But you are weak. Let me prevail upon you to lie down upon my bed until morning. I will watch outside. You need sleep—"

The fugitive shook his head.

"But I shall see you again, sir?" said the artist. "There is my card. I expect to return to London within a week, and shall be glad to see you at my chambers!"

"By that time I hope to see you in my own house," responded the fugitive. "But if I am disappointed in my hopes, I will call upon you at your residence. There I will make known to you who and what I am, and all the details of my wrongs."

He glanced restlessly around him, and as he did so his gaze fell upon a single light, burning in a lower chamber at Rock Land—a light that showed that some uneasy vigil was kept even in that stately mansion.

"Ah!" he said. "That is not a servant's chamber!"

"You know the place, then?" questioned Walter.

The fugitive's face was for a moment convulsed with emotion, and then he answered:

"I have heard of Rock Land. Who is there?"

"The owner—the Earl of Lindenwood!"

The countenance of the fugitive looked as if carved from stone, as he heard this reply, and he asked, hesitatingly, and in a hollow voice:

"Is he alone?"

"No, his niece is with him—the Lady Geraldine Stanger!"

The stranger uttered a cry that seemed to come from the depths of his soul.

"I—I must go," he faltered, as soon as he could speak. "Do not follow me. I shall proceed to London in the morning. Farewell!"

He wrung the artist's hand, pressed it to his lips, and then turned and sped in the direction of Rock Land.

Walter gazed after him in wonder, but soon concluded that the fugitive had been overcome by his fears and restlessness, and preferred to hasten to his concealment amongst the rocks.

Sleepless and excited by the strange events of the night, Walter sat up, and endeavored to calmly review the circumstances of his late acquaintance.

In the midst of his musings, he was startled by a piercing shriek, that rang over the rocks like the cry of a lost soul.

The next moment the cry was hushed, and he distinctly heard the sound of wheels upon the road.

He sprang to his feet, aroused by the fear that the fugitive had been captured by his pursuers, but when he reached the road, no person nor carriage was in sight. Searching the rocks for some trace of his new friend, he soon discovered marks of a struggle, a tiny pool of blood, and a handkerchief he had given his strange visitor.

"They have captured him!" he cried. "They are bearing him away to his prison! Would that he had told me his name or the place of his imprisonment! Can it be that this terrible mystery is to remain a mystery for ever?"

CHAPTER XVII.

What a state in guilt,
When everything alarms it! like a sentinel,
Who sleeps upon his watch, it wakes in dread,
Even at a breath of wind. Scanderbeg.

LORD ROSEBURY had duly received the communication sent him by the Earl of Lindenwood, and had conceived the liveliest hopes from its contents. Knowing the Lady Geraldine to be the idol of society, he did not doubt but that a brief seclusion from its charms would induce her to consent to become his bride. These hopes were further strengthened by the departure of Walter Lorraine for the seaside, although, fortunately for him, he did not suspect his destination to be Rock Land.

Rosebury had no mean idea of his personal attributes, and fancied that, in the absence of his rival, he would be irresistible. At first, he had some thought of following the earl to Rock Land, and trying the effect of his fascinations on that secluded spot, but he finally concluded that his lordship could present the case as well as himself to his obdurate niece, and that there was really no necessity for him to deprive himself of any of the enjoyments of the season, even for so brief a period.

Relying upon the assurance of the earl that he might proceed with the preparations for his bridal,

Rosenbury forgot some of his usual caution, and hastened to inform her ladyship that he was about to wed the Lady Geraldine.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lady Rosenbury, in accents of surprise. "Are you not mistaken, Raymond? Do you not deceive yourself? Geraldine told me that she did not love you."

"Possibly she does not cherish for me a romantic affection," responded Rosenbury; "but she will, nevertheless, marry me—and that before the season is over."

"Has she given you her word to that effect?"

"Well, no," answered Rosenbury, concealing his chagrin and annoyance at the question under a mask of carelessness. "But her uncle has promised for her, and requested me to make known our engagement. I imagine that after the engagement is once announced, the Lady Geraldine will think twice before dismissing me again."

Lady Rosenbury could not conceal her indignation at this speech.

"I am ashamed of you, Raymond," she declared, her face bearing witness to the sincerity of her words. "You must make no such announcement until Geraldine herself accepts you; and that time, I am inclined to think, will never come. If you cause any announcement to be made of a false engagement, the shame or chagrin will all fall upon yourself. Geraldine is independent enough to state the truth, and I can bear testimony to her words."

"You don't want her to marry me," said Rosenbury, bitterly, and with an angry flush on his face. "I dare say she told you she had refused me, and you replied that she had done right!"

"You speak truly, Raymond! The Lady Geraldine informed me of your proposal to her, and told me she had refused it. I think she did right in refusing her hand where she could not give her heart!"

"But if you had used your influence with her, she might have changed her mind—she loves you so much!"

"And for that very reason, Raymond, I should be very careful to say nothing to influence her. I could never take advantage of her trusting affection for me to induce her to take a step from which her own heart recoils. On the contrary, I would endeavour to act a mother's part to that motherless girl."

"And yet I dare say," remarked Raymond, "that you did not hesitate to influence her in behalf of your favourite, Walter Lorraine."

Lady Rosenbury looked surprised, and asked: "How came you to know of Walter's love for the Lady Geraldine?"

"Mrs. Lorraine told me on her death-bed!"

"Ah, I see! And it was in consequence of her communication you wished to send Walter off to Palestine?"

Rosenbury assented, glad to excuse his late propositions to Walter upon that ground, in order to divert more troublesome suspicions.

"I think, Raymond," said her ladyship, gravely, "it would have been more wisely to have given Walter an equal chance with yourself, instead of trying to get him out of the way!"

"But, with your influence to aid him, he is far more than a match for me!"

Lady Rosenbury looked thoughtful.

During her first disappointment, after she had left Walter's studio with the Lady Geraldine, she had decided that the maiden did not love the artist, but on subsequent reflection she had remembered her blushes on his name being mentioned before the visit, and she had reversed her decision.

She now believed that Walter's affection was returned, but that the Lady Geraldine's pride would for ever remain a barrier between them.

"My influence will not be needed in Walter's behalf, Raymond," she said, sadly. "If it were, I would cheerfully use it, if I knew that Lady Geraldine loved him!"

"But you would not use it in my behalf, because she regards me with aversion! I believe your ladyship would dislike to greet the Lady Geraldine as a daughter-in-law!"

"You are wrong, Raymond. There is no one whom I would so gladly welcome as my daughter, but she is unfitted for you. Your tastes and hers are very different. But why not choose some one else? There are many ladies, young and handsome, to whom you might pay your addresses with reasonable hopes of success. I should very much like to see you married!"

"You will have that happiness soon, mother," responded Rosenbury, calling her ladyship by the tender title that used to come so naturally to his lips, but which to him now sounded forced and awkward. "I am determined to wed Geraldine, and I am confident that the earl can persuade or coerce her to accept me!"

"Do I hear aright?" exclaimed Lady Rosenbury.

"Would you take an unwilling bride to the altar? You are a degenerate Rosenbury, Raymond! You have in you little of the spirit of your noble ancestors, to talk of coercing a lady into a marriage with you!"

Rosenbury turned pale at this remark, and an uneasy expression flitted over his features.

It seemed to him as if the fact that he was not a Rosenbury was made apparent in all his words and actions, and as if her ladyship must ultimately suspect his identity.

But these thoughts were but the result of his cowardly fears and ever-present consciousness of his imposture, for not the slightest suspicion of the truth had ever entered the mind of Lady Rosenbury.

"I—I intend to devote myself to her after our marriage," he said, hesitatingly, yet with sufficient decision to show that he did not intend to change his mind upon the subject, "and I don't doubt but I can make her happy! You and my father married for love, but many do not love when they marry, and yet live very happily. I will make no announcement of an engagement yet, out of respect to your scruples, but I cannot give up Geraldine! If Walter Lorraine loves her, so do I! He has already left the field to me, having gone off somewhere on the sea-coast. Her uncle approves the match, and I am inclined to think that he will make her see it in the same light as himself!"

Lady Rosenbury sighed.

She felt it would be vain to argue with Raymond, or try to induce him to yield all pretensions to the hand of the Lady Geraldine. She saw that his cold, selfish heart had been aroused to a degree of passion of which she had not deemed him capable, and this passion was, unfortunately, all lavished upon a being who could not return it.

"I can make no more efforts to dissuade you from your course, Raymond," she said, in a disappointed tone. "I can only hope that the honourable principles and keen sense of justice that characterized the late Lord Rosenbury may have been inherited, even in some slight degree, by his son. The teachings I have lavished upon you seem to have been thrown away, and I leave you to your sense of what is right!"

Rosenbury bit his lips.

It was no part of his programme to alienate from himself what little affection her ladyship might continue to cherish for him, and he felt sorry that any cause of disagreement had arisen between them. While, therefore, he would not give up his plans concerning Geraldine, he yet endeavoured to enlist Lady Rosenbury's sympathies in his favour.

In the midst of his vain efforts, a rap was heard at the door of the apartment, and Took, Rosenbury's valet, entered, bearing a card upon a salver.

"A person to see your lordship," he said, in a tone which showed that he entertained no high degree of the person he announced. "He seems to be intoxicated, your lordship, but it was impossible to get rid of him. He says he must see your lordship on important business!"

"An intoxicated fellow asking for me?" exclaimed Rosenbury. "Send him away, Took. I have no business with intoxicated fellows. Is he a gentleman?"

"No, your lordship, only a low fellow!"

"Turn him away then, Took. You should know better than to come to me about any such fellow!"

"But, your lordship," said the valet, who despite his contempt for the visitor had received from him a handsome fee for admitting and announcing him, "he says your lordship will regret not having seen him if he goes away, and he begs you just to look at his card!"

As he spoke, Took advanced the salver, on which rested a dirty piece of pasteboard, with a name inscribed upon it in a straggling handwriting.

Rosenbury involuntarily glanced at the card, and the room seemed to reel around him.

"Colte Lorraine!" he said aloud, unconscious that he spoke. "Colte Lorraine! Who is he?"

"He is the husband of your old nurse," replied Lady Rosenbury, wondering at Raymond's strange emotion.

"But he is dead. He—he died in Australia!"

"It was but a false report," returned her ladyship. "He caused a letter to be written home to that effect, as Walter wrote me the other day!"

"Not dead!" ejaculated Rosenbury. "Not dead!"

Lady Rosenbury repeated her explanation. "Go to him, Took," commanded Rosenbury, as soon as he could command his thoughts. "Show him into the drawing-room, and say that I will be with him directly!"

Took bowed and withdrew to execute the command, too discreet to show any surprise at its singularity.

"This—this is very strange!" stammered Rosenbury, "I supposed he died years ago. Mrs. Lorraine told me so!"

"She believed so, Raymond. Walter wrote me a long letter the evening before his departure from London, in which he stated the particulars of his father's history in Australia. I saw Lorraine at Walter's studio, and knew him at once!"

"And why did you not tell me?" interrupted Rosenbury. "Why did you not tell me he had returned?"

"You forget yourself, Raymond," said Lady Rosenbury, gently. "I could not suppose that the subject would have any interest for you!"

Rosenbury was alarmed at the interest he had already betrayed in Lorraine, and hastened to say, with ill-assumed carelessness.

"It's of no consequence, mother. I was interested in him on Walter's account—that's all! I suppose I must go down and see the fellow!"

"Perhaps I had better accompany you," remarked her ladyship. "He may have come hither on Walter's account—possibly with a message!"

"I wouldn't have you see the fellow for the world, mother!" cried Rosenbury, quite alarmed. "Tooks says he is intoxicated. I will bring you any message he may have for you!"

Rather pleased at the solicitude thus expressed for her, Lady Rosenbury acquiesced in Raymond's decision, and he left the room alone to seek his visitor.

It would be impossible to describe the shock he had received on learning that Colte Lorraine was alive and under his very roof!

Pale and trembling, he hastened to the drawing-room, with his thoughts in a tumult, and with but one desire—that of ridding himself of his dangerous visitor!

Opening the door with a noiseless movement, he advanced into the apartment, and found his visitor engaged in earnest contemplation of the articles of virtue and unconscious of his entrance.

He seized the opportunity of regarding Lorraine before betraying himself, in order to gain some idea of the best manner of dealing with him.

Lorraine had fitted himself up, from his wife's legacy, in a manner which he conceived appropriate for a visit to Lord Rosenbury. A dress suit adorned his person, and his great hands were encased in white kids, outside of which were ostentatiously displayed several immense rings. A pair of tightly-fitting pumps encased his feet, and his head was ornamented with a new hat which was set jauntily on the back of his head and a little at one side, after his characteristic fashion.

Having thus attired himself, he imagined that he was the "glass of fashion" and would have been highly indignant at the assertion of the astute Took that he was no gentleman, had he heard it.

In order to fortify himself for the proposed interview with Rosenbury, he had had recourse to his favourite stimulants, and his mind was in its usual hazy condition, as he stood, with one eye closed, surveying the ornaments of the drawing-room.

Little used as was Rosenbury to the study of human nature, he saw that he had nothing at present to fear from the person before him, and he conceived a hope that he might be able to manage him.

"You wished to see me, Mr. Lorraine?" he said, after a protracted survey.

Lorraine turned around abruptly, made an effort to apply a gold-framed eye-glass to his visual organ, but, failing in that, ejaculated:

"Is this Lud Rosenbury?"

Rosenbury bowed.

"Glad see you, m' lad. Hope well. I'm Colte Lorraine, service!"

With this announcement, Lorraine held out his hand and grasped the reluctant hand of his host with a vice-like earnestness.

"You're Lud Rosenbury, he, he?" continued the visitor. "Good joke, eh? He, he!"

He thrust out a finger at Rosenbury, and laughed immoderately, still clinging to his hand.

Rosenbury looked around nervously, and replied: "Pray, do not speak so loud, Mr. Lorraine! You have something to say to me, have you not?"

Lorraine seemed to feel some astonishment at this style of address, and said:

"I say. Old woman's dead, eh?"

"If you mean Mrs. Lorraine, she is!"

"Thought so. 'Mrs. Lorraine,' eh? Good joke! You's with her last moments?"

"I was!"

"Thought so. Made revelation, unstand. Is't true?"

Rosenbury bowed, with a keen sense of humiliation as he did so. He did not even like to own to this man, his father, who had placed him in his present position, that it was not his rightfully.

"Then we unstan' each other," said Lorraine, familiarly. "Got good deal say to you. Is la'ship at home?"

"She is not!" returned Rosenbury, fearing his visitor would next demand to see Lady Rosenbury.

"So much better. Can't listen!"
Despite his annoyance and anxiety, Rosenbury could not suppress a smile at the preposterous idea of Lady Rosenbury playing eavesdropper.

"You need have no fears, Mr. Lorraine," he observed coldly. "We shall not be interrupted. Proceed with your communication."

"Mr. Lorraine," repeated the visitor, evidently greatly amused at his host's dignified coldness. "He, he! Call that good joke!"

"If you have anything to say to me, please say it!" said Rosenbury, somewhat impatiently.

Lorraine's eyes twinkled, and he winked at his host familiarly, as he replied:

"Scuse me, Raymon. Know your patience. Felt so 'self. Day so hot—feel overcome heat. Mus' take nap. Shan't be long!"

As he began to loosen his necktie, Rosenbury said, hastily:

"You can't take a nap here. If you have anything to say to me, say it. Or go somewhere else and sleep off your drunkenness. I can't have you here!"

"But you mus'," returned Lorraine, doggedly. "Talk you pretty soon. Jes' now too sleepy!"

Retreating to a sofa, the unwelcome visitor threw himself upon it, drew a handkerchief over his face, and composed himself for a nap.

Rosenbury stood the picture of stupefaction, and gazed upon him.

"What if Lady Rosenbury should come into the room?" he asked himself. "What if a servant even were to make an appearance while Lorraine lay there in his drunken slumbers?"

And yet he dared not summon a servant and have the fellow thrust out.

(To be continued.)

BRITOMARTE, THE MAN-HATER.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "Self-Made," "All Alone," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

Come from the close town to the breezy sea—
The boundless sea that laveth many lands;
Where shells, unknown to cities, fair and free,
Lie brightly scattered on the gleaming sands;
There, 'mid the hush of slumbering Ocean's war,
We'll sit and watch the silver-tissued waves
Creep languidly along the silent shore,
And cool our heated feet with gentle lavas.
Mrs. Norton.

On the morning after the strange night adventure, Erminie was, in truth, pale, pensive and abstracted; and it was only by an effort of courtesy that she forced herself to take an interest in the subject of their journey.

"Oh, yes—exactly; but what I want to ask is where you and your brother went yesterday, and where you came from so late last night?" said the minister, with mock solemnity, for, in fact, he had the greatest confidence in the prudence of his children.

But Erminie's soft brown eyes widened with dismay, as she turned them with an appealing glance to her brother.

Justin gravely took upon himself the office of respondent, and related the incidents of their visit to Witch Elms.

The minister gave a very serious attention to the narrative, and at its close, said:

"I do not mind your exposure to the storm in the least; my children are not so delicately brought up as to take harm from a little rain and wind; but there is something wrong in that house!"

"Oh, father dear, yes! there is—there must be! Think of her discarding Britomarte! There must be people about her who are undermining Britomarte in order to inherit the old lady's property," eagerly exclaimed Erminie, jumping to the most commonplace conclusion in the range of possibility.

"No, my dear; it is not that. I happen to know that the old lady has only a life interest in Witch Elms, which is absolutely settled on Miss Conyers beyond any one's power to deprive her of it; also that the old place is really worth next to nothing. What little land is left to the estate is thoroughly worn out. The house is ready to tumble about the ears of the dwellers within it; and the old lady has no income except from the sale of timber from her fast wasting woods, and fruits from her old trees. Whatever else it may be that is wrong, it is not what you think," said Dr. Rosenthal.

"But oh, father dear—Britomarte! What! will become of Britomarte, now that the old lady has discarded her?" said Erminie, unconsciously clasping her hands, and gazing piteously into her father's face.

"I understand that look, my dear. Miss Conyers shall be my care. She is much too independent, I

judge, to accept a home—a permanent one, I mean—at my hands or at yours; but I will invite her here, and then find some situation for her as assistant teacher in a school, or private governess in a family. Do not worry yourself about your friend, my dear child," said Erminie's father, kindly.

"Thank you, for Britomarte, dear father. I knew you would care for her; but oh, how shall we find her?"

"You must trust in Providence, my dear. Remember, that if you and I were out of the question, there is the All-Father to care for each one of his children."

Justin had said nothing since finishing his story of the visit to Witch Elms; but as he listened to the talk of which Britomarte was the subject, his face was a study, from its perfect composure.

Next to his faith in Providence and in himself, was his faith in Britomarte and her fortunes.

"What strikes me in this adventure of yours, Rosenthal, is that strange fragment of conversation you overheard," put in Colonel Eastworth.

Justin turned an attentive face towards the speaker, and waited for him to explain himself.

"Let me see, what were the words exactly? Oh, something like these: 'Bosh! What danger? That's all over now! The verdict of the coroner's inquest settled that. Suicide. Nothing more likely. After that nothing more to be said.' Now, you observe those words argue a 'foregone conclusion,' as Shakespeare says. What conclusion? What has been done? Do you know of any mysterious death that has taken place in this neighbourhood upon which any coroner's jury has sat and returned a verdict of suicide?" continued the visitor.

"None whatever in this part for some years. But scarcely a morning paper comes in that does not record one or more," replied Justin; "though certainly, as you say, those words you quoted argue a 'foregone conclusion.' But we can keep our senses about us, and our attention alert, without forming ourselves into a detective police-force to ferret out offenders," concluded Britomarte's lover, who did not wish that part of the subject pursued.

The family arose from breakfast, and went about their several preparations for the journey.

Very early the next morning a cheerful party entered the roomy carriage that had been engaged to take them to the steamboat, where they arrived in good time.

They had a beautiful voyage by moonlight. And when the passengers dressed and went on deck the next morning, they found their boat anchored in the midst of a scene as lovely as ever painter drew or poet dreamed.

Back from the water rose and fell the land, in rolling hills and vales, and verdant woods and yellow fields, until it reached the far-off horizon, where the sun was rising under a gorgeous canopy of crimson, golden, purple, and roseate clouds.

And all this splendour of colouring—golden, harvest-crowned hills, verdant woods, azure sky, and roseate clouds—was reflected in the clear breadth of the creek as in a mirror, making a picture rich in tints as any work of Claude Lorraine's.

It was this dazzling radiance of hues that gave the scene its name of the Rainbows.

"I have never seen anything so beautiful out of Italy," said Colonel Eastworth, with earnest admiration in every tone of his voice and glance of his eye.

"Or even in Italy," added Justin, emphatically. Erminie was gazing wrapt, silent, breathless upon the heavenly beauty of the landscape.

Dr. Rosenthal was keeping watch upon the luggage that was being brought up on the deck.

While the little group stood looking on the landscape with admiration and delight, they saw a boat rowed by six men, and bearing a little pennon with the word "Welcome," in silver letters on a white ground, coming down the creek.

"It is Goldborough's boat, that he has sent to bring us off," said Dr. Rosenthal, as the little skiff, skimming the water, approached them.

In another moment it was alongside, and Albert Goldborough, dressed in a boatman's broad hat and blue jacket, sprang upon the deck.

"Good-morning, Miss Rosenthal! How do you do, doctor? Very glad to see you, colonel! Justin, old fellow, I'm delighted! But we expected you by train last evening!" exclaimed the young man, shaking hands all round.

"And we should have arrived last evening, but that this young lady preferred to come by steamboat, for the sake of running up all the creeks both sides of the water and showing our friend here our coast-scenery, as she calls it," replied Dr. Rosenthal.

"And I cannot but feel myself under great obligations to Miss Rosenthal," added Colonel Eastworth, with a glance full of meaning towards the minister's daughter that brought the colour in rich waves over her cheek.

"All well up at the house?" inquired Justin.

"Yes; all's well."

While they talked, the sailors had been lifting down their trunks, hand-boxes and portmanteaus from the deck of the steamer to the little boat. And now, as all was ready, Albert stepped forward with the intention of assisting Erminie to descend into the skiff; but he was dexterously forestalled by Colonel Eastworth, who swiftly and softly sat her down on the cushioned seat in the stern of the boat.

All the rest of the party followed. The men took their oars, and the skiff glided away from the steamer amid a flourish of glazed caps and a round of cheers from the seamen.

And while the steamer puffed away on her longer voyage, the boat glided up the creek to a little boat-house that stood among the trees like a miniature Grecian temple in some Arcadian grove.

Here they landed at some stone steps, and went up through the temple that also formed the entrance to an avenue shaded on each side by trees, and leading up to the house.

It was a white, two-storied mansion, with a vine-shaded and rose-wreathed porch running all around it.

Another beautiful picture was now presented. On these porches, seen by glimpses through the green foliage and blooming flowers, were the white-robed beauties of the house, come out to wait for and welcome the new visitors.

"You are just in time for our early breakfast, which is waiting for you! The fishing has been very successful to-day. Doctor, you have arrived at the age of wisdom when a man appreciates the good things of this life," said Albert Goldborough, as he led the way up to the house.

Alberta flew out, a fluttering white dove, to clasp Erminie to her bosom; and then to recollect herself and receive Dr. Rosenthal and the gentlemen of his party with cool but courteous hospitality.

Within the hall door the master and mistress of the house received their guests, and sent servants to attend them to their several rooms.

Alberta of course accompanied Erminie to her chamber, where the minister's daughter laid off her bonnet and mantle, and exchanged her travelling habit for a morning dress.

One minute Erminie lingered near the front windows of her chamber, to look out upon the varied landscape, the rolling hills and valleys, the verdant fields and forests, the winding creek and the broad sea, all beaming in the splendour of the morning sun, and then she turned to follow her friend down to the breakfast-room.

A pleasant room, with many windows opening to the sea on one side and to the woods on the other. A tempting table, covered with all the delicacies of the sea-side and forest shade, the orchards and the dairies. And a choice company, gathered together to enjoy to the utmost blessings within their reach.

At the breakfast-table the programme of pleasure for the day was discussed, and a fishing-party was arranged, in which ladies and gentlemen were all to join.

And after the morning meal was over, the guests separated to prepare for the excursion.

It was while the ladies were all ready and waiting for their gentlemen escorts that Erminie inquired of Alberta whether their schoolmate, Elfrida Fielding, was coming to the Rainbows.

"She has written to say that she will be here in a day or two. So also has Britomarte Conyers," answered Miss Goldborough.

"Britomarte Conyers! Oh! is she really coming? When did you hear from her? Where is she? How is she? What day will she be here?" eagerly inquired Erminie, hurrying question upon question in a manner that must have bewildered anyone less self-possessed than Alberta Goldborough.

She wrote on Monday last, from Edinburgh, to say that she had decided to accept the invitation I gave her when we parted, and that she would be with us on or before Saturday evening," answered the young lady, calmly and clearly.

"And she is well? She is happy? She is all right?" breathlessly questioned Erminie.

"It is to be presumed so," answered Alberta, elevating her light eyebrows in cool surprise.

The gentlemen now came out, accoutred with their fishing paraphernalia.

Erminie hastened to her brother, and slipped her hand over his arm and whispered hurriedly:

"Oh, Justin! Britomarte has been heard from. She has written to Alberta to say that she is coming here."

"I am very glad to hear it. When?" inquired Justin, with an earnestness of interest that he did not attempt to disguise.

"On or before Saturday evening."

"And is that all?"

"Yes; that is all I know. Alberta told me."

They were now walking down the avenue, in a procession formed of all the fishing-party, towards the

boat-house, where all the boats were in readiness for their raid upon the bay.

They reached the boat-house, and were in the act of getting into the boats when their ears were startled by a voice calling out:

"Stop! hold on! Where are you all going? Wait for me!"

Looking in the direction whence the voice came, there they saw Elfrida Fielding, mounted on a little black horse, and galloping towards them from down the forest road.

Of course there was a halt in the company as the young sprits dashed up to the spot, and sprang from their saddles before any of the gentlemen of the party could get out of the boats to assist her.

"Wait for me! I can tuck up my skirt and get in the boat just as I am." One of the servants can take my horse to the stable. And some of the gentlemen can lend me a spare fishing—Oh! how do you do, Mr. Albert?—Thank you!"

All this was rattled off by the wild girl, as she quickly pinned up her riding-skirt and ran down to the boats, and gave her hand to young Mr. Goldsborough, who had stepped forward to meet her and help her into his own especial skiff.

"How do you do, Alberta? I would come and pay my respects to you, only you are too far off!"

Elfrida called out to Miss Goldsborough, who was in a distant boat, commanded by the young Italian Professor, who was one of the guests of the house.

"I am very glad to see you, Elfrida; but surely you did not come unattended," said Alberta, who was in truth somewhat shocked by the unceremonious onset of her friend.

"And what if I did? No one was going to eat me on the road. But I didn't. Pa's behind there, somewhere. I outrode him as soon as I saw the boats. He will be here presently, and make himself comfortable up at the house with your pa. We would have been here last night, only it was so late when we got to the Sportsman's Repose, as the horrid old house is called. Pa put up there all night, not to disturb you at unreasonable hours."

"Ah, how do you do, Erminie? When did you get here?" said the witch, suddenly catching sight of the minister's daughter, who was seated in the farthest boat, with her brother and Colonel Eastworth.

Erminie bowed and smiled her greeting; but did not dare to trust her voice to the high key required to answer Elfrida from that distance.

And so the boats put off.

A fine day, a merry company, a successful fishing, and delicious luncheon! What else was wanted to complete the enjoyment of the party?

Sparkling little black-eyed Elfrida bewitched the tall, fair-haired betrothed of Miss Goldsborough.

But Alberta was not jealous; that beautiful, blue-eyed blonde was only too well pleased to be left to listen in peace to that handsome, dark Italian troubadour, who had rowed her boat into a clear and shady nook, where, instead of troubling the fish, he rested at the feet of the beauty and sang to the accompaniment of his guitar one of the sweetest love-songs of his musical native land.

CHAPTER XIV.

Heed not though at times she seem
Dark and still, and cold as clay;
She is shadowed by her dream,
But 'twill pass away.

Barry Cornwall.

You love her, yearn to tell her, yet have
No one's heart word to tell her all.

Brownlow.

It was nearly sunset when the fishing party turned the boats in the direction of home, and they entered the creek just as the level rays of the sinking sun lighted up all the land and water in the rainbow hues that gave the place its name.

They debarked at the boat-house, leaving the fish and the fishing-tackle in the boats, to be cared for by Justin, while they went on, a merry, straggling party, up the avenue towards the house.

As they drew near, their merriment was suddenly hushed.

On the porch was seated a solitary figure clothed in deep mourning.

While all were looking to see who the stranger was, Erminie, with a suppressed cry, recognized Britomarte, and sprang up the stairs to greet her.

Alberta quickly followed to welcome her new guest.

"Oh, Britomarte, I am so glad—so glad to see you, dearest. How—!" began Erminie, gaily; then, suddenly becoming aware of her friend's black dress and grave face, she moderated her excitement, and murmured, as she embraced Miss Conyers, "Oh, Britomarte, darling, you have lost some one. I am so sorry for you."

"Hush; yes, I have lost some one. Take no notice. How do you do, Alberta?—I am better than my

promise, you perceive. I am here before my time. Do I come too soon?" said Britomarte, who, after returning the embrace of Erminie, had looked up to receive the welcome of Miss Goldsborough.

"Certainly not; you could not come too soon. I am now quite contented, for you complete our party," replied the heiress, with as much cordiality as was consistent with her cool, well-governed nature. "But you have lost a friend," added Miss Goldsborough, gravely.

"Yes, I have lost a friend— Ah, how do you do, Elfrida? I am very glad to meet you again," said Miss Conyers, breaking off abruptly from answering Alberta to shake hands with Elfrida, who had unceremoniously seized her.

"Oh, dear Britty, who's dead? Nobody very near to you, I hope?" exclaimed the thoughtless girl, in a low, hurried voice.

"The nearest I had in the world! But do not speak of this. I am wearing black; but I did not come among you to be a damper," said Miss Conyers, in a low, calm, firm voice, that silenced the giddy girl.

The other members of the fishing party now came up.

Those who had had a previous acquaintance with Miss Conyers, seeing her mourning dress, welcomed her with grave courtesy. Those who had to be introduced to her bowed with seriousness approaching solemnity.

And all presently dispersed to get ready for dinner. Alberta accompanied Britomarte and Erminie to the spacious chamber looking out upon the sea, and which had been appropriated to the use of the minister's daughter.

"The crowded state of the house obliges me to put you two in a room together," explained Miss Goldsborough, as they entered.

"You could not do me a greater kindness," said Erminie, who, as the first occupant of the room, felt a propriety in making the new-comer welcome, and who, as Britomarte's most loving friend, could do so with cordial sincerity.

"And I am very well pleased to be with my darling," said Miss Conyers.

"I thought that you both would be pleased," graciously smiled Miss Goldsborough, as she left the friends to themselves.

"Dear Britomarte!" said Erminie, throwing her arms around Miss Conyers, "I feel so distressed for you! All that touches you touches me! Tell me all about it, Britomarte."

"Darling, I have lost some one. I have suffered; but my heart is not broken, else I should not be here. That is all that I can tell you, for there is good reason why I cannot tell you more. I hate mystery, my pet; but this mystery—and I acknowledge that it is one—is none of mine. Ask me no more."

And pressing a kiss upon her favourite's forehead, Miss Conyers turned away.

Erminie, with a sigh, began to change her grey woollen fishing dress for a light-coloured organdy robe suitable for the evening.

Britomarte also changed her black alpaca travelling habit for a black grenadine dress, and when both were ready they went down to dinner.

At the foot of the stairs they met Dr. Rosenthal and Justin waiting for Erminie.

Neither of these gentlemen had heard of Britomarte's arrival.

The doctor had been in the stables with Mr. Goldsborough and Mr. Fielding. And Justin had lingered at the boat-house to see to the safe bestowal of the boats.

Now Erminie could but notice the involuntary start forward, and the sudden lighting up of countenance with which Justin recognized Britomarte; and at the same time she felt the heart of the man-hater throb faster and harder against her own arm that rested near it.

"These two love each other in spite of all," was the mental comment of the minister's daughter, as she saw the meeting, and took the arm of her father, thus leaving Britomarte to Justin.

As for the two gentlemen of the group, the old minister warmly shook hands with Miss Conyers, and cordially welcomed her as an addition to their party.

Justin bowed gravely and offered her his arm. And so they passed into the drawing-room to await the announcement of dinner.

Meanwhile Alberta Goldsborough, on leaving her friends, made a careful evening toilet, and then joined her mother in Mrs. Goldsborough's own room, with the view of satisfying her curiosity respecting Miss Conyers.

"Mamma," she inquired, "do you know who Britomarte is in mourning for?"

"My dear," replied the lady, hesitatingly, "I think I do."

"Who is it then, mamma?"

"The nearest and dearest she had in the world."

"But that is not telling me who it is, mamma."

"My child, I would rather not pursue the subject. It is scarcely one fit for your discussion. This, however, I will say, that I consider the loss a good thing for Miss Conyers."

"Mamma, with this strange story hanging around Britomarte, do you think it was quite the thing to invite her here? If the other visitors should discover—"

"Miss Goldsborough," said the lady, holding up her finger in a warning manner, "stop just where you are. Any person whom your father and myself agree to invite to our house is unquestionably a proper associate for any of our visitors. How much or how little of this 'strange story,' as you call it, may have reached your ears, I do not know. Little enough I hope is your knowledge of it. But let us hear no more about it, Alberta," concluded Mrs. Goldsborough, in a gentler tone.

And they went down to the drawing-room together.

As the guests were now all assembled, dinner was announced.

The lady of the house, as a mark of grace, took the arm of Dr. Rosenthal and led the way to the table, unconscious that Miss Goldsborough followed her, conducted by the handsome, ineligible Italian professor; or that Albert Goldsborough led the little witch Elfrida Fielding.

Erminie was escorted by Colonel Eastworth, and Britomarte by Justin Rosenthal, who had not left her side since he had met her at the foot of the stairs.

The other guests, with whom we have nothing to do, followed as they pleased.

But to all who were not too much absorbed in their own affairs to notice those of others, this procession to the dinner-table was very significant of the "elective affinities" between certain of the young people.

I am not going to describe in detail the life at this waterside country-house, although it was a life well worth living in the summer holiday months.

I shall glance at a few of its recreations.

There were riding and driving, sailing and fishing parties, and picnics in the woods, during the day.

And there were music and dancing and card-parties in the evenings.

Britomarte, in mourning though she was, became no kill-joy to the house.

Indeed, notwithstanding her black dress and pensive face, it was observed by those who knew her best, that she now looked freer and easier and happier than she had ever done before.

It seemed as though something had happened which, while it touched her heart with a tender sorrow, relieved her life from a great terror.

She was not the slightest hindrance to the festivities of the company; she joined in all the quiet recreations, and only avoided the noisy gaieties.

Meantime, however, there was a great deal of gossip about Miss Conyers, when she and her host and hostess were absent; for of course, in a large country house, where there was anything unexplained about any member of the company, there was sure to be gossip; and equally, of course, it could only be indulged in during the absence of the object of it and of her entertainers.

Certainly, like all other gossip, it was fiction founded upon fact; but the superstructure bore a very unfair proportion to the foundation.

They—the gossips—said that Miss Conyers' aunt had discarded her, which was perfectly true; but they added that it was for some grave fault, which was utterly false.

They observed that Mr. Rosenthal was devoted to Miss Conyers, and they were right; but they remarked that she was doing all that she could to catch him, in which they were wrong.

They noted that she had but two dresses—a coarse alpaca that she wore in the morning, and a thin grenadine for evening; and they divined that her means were very small and growing smaller without any prospect of increase; and in this they were correct. But they concluded, therefore, that her visit to the Rainbows was a mere act of sponging upon the hospitality of the Goldsboroughs; and in this they were widely mistaken.

They said confidently that she was staying at the Rainbows until she should be able to turn herself round, and they wondered what she would do next.

A rumour got afloat that some inexplicable reproach attached to her that must prevent her success in either obtaining a situation as teacher or a proposal of marriage, and they wondered what would become of the poor girl.

Some of these uncomplimentary conjectures were made in the presence of Erminie, who at first confined herself to modest praises of her absent friend; but when those praises were met by sarcasms and innuendoes levelled at Miss Conyers, the minister's daughter, though the gentlest of all gentle creatures,

proved that she could become a lion-hearted lamb in the defence of one she loved.

After one of these single-handed encounters with the whole host of Britomarte's traducers, Erminie, rubbing from their presence with her eyes full of indignant tears, ran up against her brother.

"What has vexed you, my darling?" was the surprised question.

"Give me your arm down the avenue, and I will tell you," gasped Erminie.

And Justin drew her hand within his arm and led her where she wished to go.

And when they were at a safe distance from the house, Erminie told her brother all that the ladies had been saying of Britomarte.

Justin pressed his sister to his heart, saying tenderly:

"If it were possible for me to love you more than I do now, darling, it would be for your loyalty to your friend. Be at ease, sweet sister. This shall be set right. My prospects justify me in thinking of marriage. And with my dear father's full approval, I am about to ask Miss Conyers to be my wife."

CHAPTER XV.

For she is young and led astray.
This Britomarte, and schemes, men say,
To change the laws of church and state;
So thine shall be an angel's fate.
Who'er the thunder breaks, shall roll
The cloud away, and save her soul.

Browning.

MISS CONYERS was certainly the most brilliant woman in the circle of beauties gathered together at the Rainbows.

Nothing but her poverty, obscurity, and the mystery underlying her life, prevented her from being the belle of the sea-side villa.

But poor, obscure, and even questionable as was her social position, she excited the admiration of the men, the jealousy of the women, and the interest of all.

There were fairer women, with more regular features and brighter bloom than she possessed, and they had all the aid of French laboratories and fashionable bazaars to enhance their beauty; but not one of them owned a face so lovely, attractive, and fascinating as hers; it was beautiful even in repose; but when thought or feeling lighted and warmed her countenance, it was irresistible.

There were fine singers there, who had been trained by celebrated masters, but not one whose voice was so rich, full, clear and powerful, and so wide and free of compass, and so full of passion and expression, as hers.

A wonderful voice! It was as Justin said.

But her most marvellous power was in her readings—her dramatic readings.

There is scarcely one good reader in a million, even among professors of the art. I have heard but two who equalled Britomarte—one was the renowned Rachel, and the other still lives, and must therefore be nameless here.

Being possessed of this accomplishment, Britomarte was often called upon to exercise it for the amusement of her companions.

We all like to do what we know we can do best, and Miss Conyers was always at the service of the company with her "Readings from the Poets." She read without embarrassment, even when knowing herself to be before carping, captious, envious critics, who were keenly on the watch to find fault.

She read freely, because she felt herself and entered, mind, soul and spirit, into the thought, passion, or pathos of her subject. The tones of her voice, the expression of her countenance, changed naturally with the changing emotion of her theme.

And yet, indeed, it was not all nature, but nature refined by cultivation to the highest art.

Of all Britomarte's gifts, this was the one which most excited the admiration of her friends and the envy of her foes.

"She reads well—too well for a young lady," said one of the mildest of her detractors, one morning after she had given them an "evening with the poets."

"Too well! She reads as no decent young woman ever could! Only think of her reading Browning's 'Count Gismond' straight through word for word! I declare I didn't know where to put my head," said a Mrs. Allan, who was of the party.

"I did not notice anything wrong in 'Count Gismond,'" said little Miss Bend; "but it is quite dreadful the way her face changes! Why, when she was reading 'Guy Ransome' for us last night, when she came to the part of Meg Merriles, I declare her face drew down and sank in, and darkened till she looked ninety years old, and then, all in a moment, when she came to Lucy Bartram, her face shortened up and bloomed out until it was as young and tender as—Erminie's! And all that without any change of dress, or paint or powder, or anything but—but—"

"The soul," said Erminie, helping the critic to an idea.

"Yes; really! It was just as if her soul had suddenly cast off the form of the old woman, and taken that of a young girl."

"Or, rather, it was the plastic power of the soul that moulds the face to its own will," said Erminie.

"And then in her ballad readings how wonderful she is! In reading Monk Lewis's 'Maniac' she is terrible! And in Browning's 'Confessional' she is more than terrible—she is awful—she overcomes me!" said Britomarte's admirer.

"Of all her repertoire, I like best her reading of Macaulay's 'Battle of Ivry.' There never was so grand a battle piece written, to begin with! And in her reading of that I admire her most, for in that she is by turns solemn, pathetic, terrible, and always glorious! Do you remember how she gives this stanza:

"Now, by the lips of those ye love, fair gentlemen of France,

Charge! for the golden lilies now! upon them with the lance!"

A thousand spears are striking deep, a thousand spears in rest,

A thousand knights are pressing close behind the snow white crest,

And in they burst! and on they rushed! while like a guiding star,

Amid the thickest carnage blazed the helmet of Navarre!

"Heavens!" continued Erminie, with unusual enthusiasm for her tender nature, "when Britomarte reads that poem, I see, hear, and feel the whole battle scene! She, I know, is utterly lost to time, place, and circumstances present. She is no longer in the middle of the nineteenth century, in the drawing-room of a sea-side villa, reading to a company of carping critics. No! She is in the midst of the sixteenth century, on the battle field of Ivry, with the young Navarre leading his knights to victory. Oh! I often think Britomarte might be the Joan of Arc in some future heroic war!"

exclaimed Miss Rosenthal earnestly.

"Young ladies," said Mrs. Dornton, a very dignified person of their party, "I am quite shocked to hear you go on as you do. The effect those readings have upon your imagination, proves to my mind their great impropriety. Certainly the young woman reads with effect—with too much effect; and in every instance seems to fancy herself the hero or heroine of the play or poem, and transforms herself with great ease to the prisoner of the inquisition, the victim of the private mad-house, the hero of Ivry, the gipsy bag, or the Highland maiden. But what is this after all but the art of the actress? And what is she fit for but the stage?"

"Be careful, if you please, Mrs. Dornton," said Erminie, warmly. "Miss Conyers is at present my most esteemed friend, and may soon become, I hope and trust, my nearest female relative. Wonderfully endowed she is indeed to illustrate dramatic art, were dramatic art what it should be; but since it is not so, the idea you venture to advance is inadmissible in regard to her. And in future, Mrs. Dornton, I must request you to speak with more respect when you name Miss Conyers," pursued the little lion-hearted lamb.

"Hoity-toity! Is Miss Conyers about to become your step-mother, to be sure? Well, she is just the sort of girl to run away with the wife of an old gentleman!" laughed the lady.

"Or of a young one either, madam! It is patent to all that Miss Conyers is the most admired woman of our party. But she is not going to be my step-mother. She is too wise to wed a man of thrice her own age; nor has my father any thought of putting even the most esteemed woman in my dear mother's vacant place," said Erminie, with gentle dignity.

"Perhaps then it is your handsome brother upon whom this nuptial will bestow her hand," sneered the widow.

"If so, my brother could not be more highly honoured, I am sure. Good morning, Mrs. Dornton," said Erminie, curtseying with a delicate irony as she left the lady's presence.

"Fort little minx!" muttered the rebuked detractor to herself, as she turned to declaim against Britomarte to some other hearer.

I have spoken of this wonderful dramatic power of Britomarte—this protean power of taking any shape; this magic power of changing her voice and her face; this awful power of merging her own identity in that of another being—because it exercised a mighty influence upon her destiny, not, however in the way Mrs. Dornton presumed. Britomarte had never seen the inside of a theatre in all her life; she was in truth conscientiously opposed to the stage, and the most unlikely of all women to be attracted by anything her conscience disapproved.

Only, my reader, when you meet Britomarte in strange scenes and strange shapes, you will please remember this protean power of hers and not be incredulous.

Justin Rosenthal loved Britomarte Conyers, with a

depth and earnestness of affection, and a singleness and persistence of purpose, very rarely experienced in this world of many distracting attractions and conflicting interests.

To win her as his wife was just now the first object of his existence; an object which he determined to accomplish before he should undertake any other enterprise—so as to get the affair off his mind, he said, and also that they two might commence the work of the world together as man and woman should.

And Britomarte? Well, it would have been almost impossible for any other woman, and it was difficult even for her, to conceal from the deeply-interested, keenly-searching eyes of her lover the true state of her affections.

Britomarte loved Justin; but she combated that love with all the strength of her strong will.

Within her bosom there was going on a fight fiercer than that fabled one between Christian and Apollon.

The battle was a silent one, confined to her own bosom; an invisible one, concealed, she hoped, from all eyes.

It was indeed concealed from all but one pair of deeply-reading eyes.

And she who was a mystery to all others, was very transparent to her lover.

He watched the war waging between her intellect and her affections; between the principles of woman's rights and the pleadings of woman's love.

He knew that he must sooner or later enter into this combat, and take sides with love, who then of course must be the victor.

But he could be a patient as well as a persistent lover.

He never relented in his resolution to conquer the beautiful man-hater; he never relaxed in his devotion to her, whether she received his attentions courteously or met them churlishly.

He waited the proper time for making known his wishes towards her. That time was now drawing near.

The summer was fading into autumn; the season was waning to its close; the guests at the Rainbows were preparing to leave.

In truth, Mr. and Mrs. Goldsborough were not very sorry to see their party breaking up. It had not indeed afforded them that full measure of satisfaction which their princely hospitality deserved.

Two circumstances especially annoyed them. The growing friendship between their sole heiress, the fair Alberta, and the Signor Vittorio, the penniless young Italian, on the one hand; and the manifest attachment between their nephew Albert and Farmer Fielding's pretty daughter.

And very much relieved they were when the sensitive young Italian, who was neither adventurer nor fortune-hunter, nor willing to be considered such—feeling the social atmosphere near the presence of his entertainers rather chilly, took the hint that his welcome was worn out, and bowed his adieu; and also when Farmer Fielding placed his little girl on her pony and carried her off to Sunnyslopes.

Elfrida had entreated Britomarte to go with her to her mountain home, urging that the country was ever most beautiful in the autumn when all the woods were clothed in colours more gorgeous than the robes of Solomon in all his glory.

Miss Conyers had declined the visit with thanks, and with the explanation that her plans for the autumn were fixed.

So Elfrida, with a sigh, left her friend.

But what of Britomarte? Where would she go from this temporary home?

Not certainly to Witch Elm, since there the doors were fast closed against her entrance. Where then could she go?

What means had she to go anywhere? What then were the plans of which she spoke; and how would she carry them out? Who could tell. Not even her lover!

Justin knew well enough what his own plans were and how he should carry them out.

Three days before the day appointed for his own party to leave the Rainbows, Justin sought a private interview with Britomarte.

He knew where to find her; for by this time he was well acquainted with all her favourite haunts.

It was late in the afternoon, and he was sure she would be found on The Rock—a solitary desert, though so near the peopled villa, and only frequented by the lonely girl.

So down a narrow path, leading through the thick woods that lay below the house, he wandered till he came out upon the bluff overhanging the beach. Along the rocky bluff, now burnished bright in the late sunshine of the waning summer and the fading day, he went towards the tip of that long point extending like a giant's arm out to the sea.

As he approached he saw that she was sitting on

the rock with her hands clasped upon her knee, her face turned seaward, and her black dress very conspicuous upon the glistening white stone at the extremity of the point.

So absorbed was she in thought that she remained totally unconscious of Justin's proximity until he picked up her bonnet, which had fallen to the ground, and handed it to her, saying:

"Excuse me, Miss Conyers, but the tide is creeping in, and if left there it will get wet; and even you, if you remain here much longer, may be cut off from return, for you must be aware that at high water this point of land is covered by the sea, with the exception of this rock, which for the time becomes an island."

"Thank you, Mr. Rosenthal. I know that; but there is an hour of grace left. Pray, did you come here to remind me that twice a day this rock becomes an isolated fastness?" said Miss Conyers, raising her large, brilliant dark grey orbs to his face.

And no one who saw the calmness of her well-controlled countenance, or heard the steadiness of her measured tones, could have surmised the tumultuous rebellion of emotions excited in her bosom by the sudden intrusion of Justin upon her privacy—that is, no one but her lover himself, who saw beneath the calm exterior the struggle arise anew between her mind and heart.

"Was it for that you took the trouble to walk all the way here from the villa?" she repeated, ironically.

"No, Miss Conyers; it was for something more serious—more important—more imminent, indeed, than that," said Justin, gravely, seating himself beside her. "It would be bad," he continued, "if the rising tide, before you should become aware of it, should cover the point and cut you off from the land, and leave you alone upon this rock for twelve hours of darkness; but the evil would be temporary. You are brave enough to over-live it, and the night would end in morning, and your road lie open for your return. Britomarte! dear Britomarte!—there is an isolation more to be dreaded for you, because more fraught with fatal consequences, than that I have named could be," said Justin, trying to regulate the deep emotions of that passion which was thrilling in every infection of his earnest voice. "Oh, Britomarte!"

"Hush! do hush, and go away," she exclaimed, hastily interrupting him.

"No, no—I must speak. I have been silent long enough. Dear Britomarte, you must hear me now. You cannot have mistaken the meaning of my devotion to you in all the months we have passed together here. You—"

"Nor could you have failed to perceive that such devotion was very unacceptable to me. I thank you, of course. It was very complimentary to me, no doubt, and I—was very much honoured indeed. But, as I said before, it was unacceptable, and you must have perceived that it was so."

"But I did not," said Justin, with a slight smile. "A man of delicate perceptions would have done so. I did all I could to enlighten you."

"I saw a struggle going on in your bosom. I saw—But, ah! dearest, I will not tell you now what I saw. I did not come to do that. I came to tell you, Britomarte, how long and how entirely I have loved you—"

His voice trembled and broke.

"Stay," she said; "say no more. I cannot listen to that. I have honestly endeavoured to save you from the humiliation that men feel, or fancy, when they have made such a mistake as you just have—"

"Britomarte," he cried, in a quivering voice. "I have made no mistake in my own feelings. I love you more than life!"

"But you have, it seems, in mine."

"No, nor in yours. I affirm it," he said, earnestly, and a little proudly.

"Mr. Rosenthal, I cannot listen to this. If you are a gentleman, you will not press this matter!" exclaimed Britomarte.

She too, was deeply, strongly moved, and exerting all the strength of her strong will to control, or to conceal her emotion.

"If you are a gentleman, you will leave me," she repeated.

"As I am a man, I must stay and win a hearing from the woman I love more than words can tell."

"Then, if you persist in staying, I must go," said Britomarte, rising.

"No, no, Britomarte! I beseech you, no! Do not sit! Stay! Hear me! Only hear me—it is not much to ask. Only hear me, and then—reject me if you can," he pleaded, even more earnestly with his steadfast eyes and hands than with his words.

She understood a sort of defiance in his words—"and then reject me if you can," and that restored her self-control. Re-seating herself calmly, she said:

"The woman who hesitates is lost," 'tis written. Perhaps you are thinking of that; perhaps you believe it. We shall see! Go on, Mr. Rosenthal. I will hear all you have to say; but I warn you that no words of yours can affect my feelings, or my principles, or my resolution."

Underneath all this exterior serenity what emotion there was! It vibrated along the tones of her sweet voice, and quivered over the surface of her eloquent face.

Justin raised her hand, and pressed it to his lips, before she could prevent him; re-seated himself by her side, paused a moment, and then, in a voice thrilled with the strong passion of his heart, he said:

"Britomarte, I love you. Oh! that I could make you feel the real meaning of the phrase when uttered by truthful lips. All of life, or death—seems to hang upon the words, I love you! Britomarte, from the first moment that I saw you, something in your face powerfully attracted me. It was not your beauty, dearest, though you are beautiful; it was something deeper than that. It was the soul looking from the face! I persuaded my sister to present me to you; and when she had done so, and left us together, a nearer view and closer acquaintance deepened the interest that your face alone had first awakened. I was spell-bound to your side. You may remember that I left you no more during the whole evening."

"Yes; I was but a school-girl, ignorant of the impropriety of monopolizing a gentleman's attention for so long a time. A gentleman should have known better; but I believe the order is extinct," answered Miss Conyers, doing all she could to steel her heart.

"That is severe, but I hope not true; certainly not true so long as my father lives," said Justin, with the slightest possible approach to a smile.

"No; while Dr. Rosenthal exists, one gentleman assuredly lives," admitted Britomarte, compunctiously.

"That being conceded, I will go on," said Justin, lightly; but it was with a lightness only assumed, for as he resumed the subject nearest his heart, his voice again became agitated by suppressed passion. "There was not the slightest shadow of an impropriety in my monopolizing you for the whole evening; the act was mine, and not yours, fairest lady; nor do I feel the least twinge of conscience in the recollection of that delightful monopoly. Even on that evening, Britomarte, I already knew that I had then met the woman whom I could love exclusively, devotedly, as long as my life should last. Since that evening I have seen you frequently and known you intimately; and the love born on that first evening has been fostered and strengthened, as even then I foresaw it would be, by all that I have seen or known of you since then."

"It is a pity that all this should be wasted on a woman who can never return it," said Miss Conyers, in a voice trembling with what might have seemed anger, but which Justin really knew to be the struggles of her own repressed but still responding feelings.

"It will not be so wasted," answered Rosenthal, calmly. "Ah, Britomarte, I love you not as men love in these latter days, when the passion for money, fame, place, power, glory, smothered and overwhelms the grand primal passion that lies at the foundation of all life. I love you not as men love who, if they are disappointed in one woman this year, easily console themselves with another next year. I love you as men loved in those old heroic days, when for woman's smile solemn vows were made, mighty missions undertaken, great works accomplished, and deadly perils braved. I love you with my whole heart and soul, once and for ever! And if it were possible that I could lose you, Britomarte, I should never love again! And now, lady, I have unveiled my heart before you. Now tell me, dearest—dearest—what can I do to deserve—"

His voice faltered for a single instant, and she took swift advantage of the pause to answer hastily and even harshly:

"You can do nothing! I never can accept your suit! Pray, to begin with, are you aware that I am a girl of very obscure birth?"

"That is nothing to me, beloved—"

"That I have not a penny—"

"I have more than enough for both, Britomarte!"

"And worse than all, that the shadow of a great shame is thought to rest upon my life?"

"How should that affect your personal merit, or my appreciation of it? Britomarte! Britomarte!" he broke forth, passionately. "I know that you are a noble woman—that falsehood has never sullied your lips, nor any mean thought tarnished the brightness of your brow, nor any just reproach bowed your head! This being so, let the substance of that shadow be what it may, it can make no difference in my sentiments towards you! I love you, I earnestly wish to make you my wife!"

"And you a clergyman, and the son of a clergyman!"

"So much the more reason I should be true as truth and just as justice!—Britomarte! Britomarte! beloved! hear me! Every shadow on your history, every sorrow on your heart, every trial in your path, does but deepen my love and strengthen my faith, and increase my desire to gather you to my bosom and shelter you from all trouble, and save you from all danger! Come, darling! come!"

And he held out his arms and pleaded with his eyes.

She was indeed terribly shaken by the fierce struggle in her bosom between woman's rights and woman's love.

She heard his pleading tones, but dared not look at him.

For a moment victory hung suspended.

"Come, darling, come. I never can be less than your lover. Let me be more! Accept me for your husband!"

"For my master, you mean. That is what 'husband' signifies in your laws!" said the man-hater, coldly turning away, as once more woman's rights throttled and threw down woman's love.

"No! heaven forbid! I could no more be a tyrant than I could be a slave! My soul abhors both! And if in your own soul there is one quality that attracts me more than all the others, it is your impassioned love of liberty. I sympathize with it, my beloved! I have no wish to rule over you as a master! I could not, indeed, endure the love of a slave! Or if one must serve, let it be the stronger. I wish only to cherish you as my beloved wife, to honour you as my liege lady! Come, darling!"

But woman's rights had her heel upon the neck of woman's love, and Britomarte coldly answered, as she walked away:

"If these days were like 'the old heroic days' of which you just now spoke, when men braved deadly perils and wrought great works for woman's smile, I would have every woman lay upon her suitor the holy task of reforming the laws as the only possible condition of her favour!"

"I will take up the gauntlet that you have flung down," he continued. "I will look into those offensive statutes that were made, by-the-by, some centuries before I was born, and for which, therefore, I do not see that I can be held individually responsible!"

Justin bowed gravely to her, and smiled quietly at himself.

They were walking away from the rock, where indeed they had already lingered too long; for the tide was now rising rapidly, threatening to cut off their retreat from the main.

(To be continued.)

A COLLECTION of old coins in a pot of earthenware was discovered recently at Metternich, on the Moselle. The dates on these coins are 1532, 1553, 1554, and 1555. The following are the inscriptions on them:—"Henricus II. Dei G. Francor. Rex," "Max. Z. Rom. Imper.," "Philipp. V. Hispan. Rex," and "Augustus Dei. G. Dux Saxonie."

CURIOUS ANNOUNCEMENT IN A CHURCH.—Some few Sundays since the congregation assembled in the parish church of Cuckney, Nottinghamshire, were much surprised by the clerk giving out the following notice:—"I hereby give notice that the Duke of Portland's rent-day will be held at the Swan Hotel, Mansfield, on Tuesday, the 31st of October," and adding, without any pause, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God."

POST OFFICE REFORM.—A popular lecture was given a few days ago by Mr. John Richardson, C.C., in the Vestry Hall, Bishopsgate Street. His subject was "The Penny Post, with Sketches, historical and humorous, of the Rise and Progress of the Post Office from the earliest formation to the present time." He stated that in the last year of the old postal system, the number of letters passing through the post was only 78,000,000, whereas in 1863 they were 642,000,000. He concluded an animated and interesting lecture with an appeal on behalf of the City of London Ragged School.

A SENSATION is to be caused next September in Paris, when we are to have an exhibition of all sorts of fish, "all alive oh!"—from the Basking-like whale to the Tom Thumb-like shrimp. The fresh-water fish are also to be well represented, and a full-grown six hundred-weight silurus will be among the wonders. The ingenuity of getting up novelties for the amusement, and perhaps the instruction, of the public, is amongst the singular characteristics of the age. In former times there were not quite the same facilities, but still not such a marked difference as we find in the character of enterprise of the times now and then.

THE HEROINE OF MONTGATZ.

Peace be to those who nobly bleed
In freedom and their country's cause,
Protecting, in the hour of need,
Their charter, liberty and laws!
Loud swell the dirge, the anthem swell,
Frosh, vivid wreaths, fair maids, entwined,
That may to future ages tell,
Their lives heroic, and their fate divine.

MONTGATZ was closely besieged. Every avenue of egress was guarded by a line of steel and fire; no ways of escape were left to the beleaguered garrison, no means afforded of obtaining reinforcements or supplies. Yet still the dauntless garrison maintained the unequal struggle against the Austrian host—the dread power of the oppressor who sought to deprive Hungary of its ancient liberties, and reduce it to a dependency of the empire.

Heroic men! to you this tribute is surely due, the tear of sorrow shall for ever keep your laurels green. Noble warriors! whose valour had afforded a resistance which for months had held the foe at bay.

And more than all, the brave Belleski, who had died a hero's death in leading the last desperate sally against the Austrian cohorts. With him fell the hopes of the garrison. They no longer made those fierce attacks, but kept within their defences.

In their hour of gloom there came forward one, whose name was dear to every heart, to supply the place of the fallen Belleski. This was Alexina, the wife of the Hungarian chief, Count Tekeli. When her husband departed for the Turkish court, to seek for succour for his oppressed country, he left her in Montgatz to rule in his stead, with Belleski to command the troops, until such time as he might return.

For a long month had Alexina awaited that event, holding out the city with the hope of his return with the expected aid; but now her sword, her right arm, as she called him, brave Belleski, was stricken from her, and hope almost died within her heart.

The last night's attack had cost her dear, and she found herself left the isolated leader of discouraged officers and weakened soldiers.

As she sat in her solitary chamber, hope and fear ruled in her heart by turns. Brooding over the difficulties which encompassed her, she was disturbed by the appearance of one of her officers.

"What is it now?" she said, with a sad smile, for his face denoted him the harbinger of evil tidings.

"Madam," he answered, "it is impossible to restrain the fury of the people. Forgetting, in the hour of peril, all the oaths they have taken, all the duty that they owe to you, they surround the castle, and demand an audience of your Highness. Let me conjure you to take some measures to appease them. Surrender is inevitable!"

"Surrender?" cried Alexina, sharply, springing to her feet.

"Consider your life, madam."

"Consider my honour!" she returned, proudly. "I am your leader, and I trust in heaven rightly to direct my steps. Take from my private stores the whole of those provisions there reserved for me, distribute them to such as need; then call the council hither, and their wise decrees shall quickly be made known."

The officer departed, and Alexina was left to commune with her own dark thoughts.

"Dearest Tekeli," she cried, "if it is the will of fate that we should meet no more, if it is decreed that thy high-beating heart be pierced by some assassin's knife, and if thy glorious soul has winged its flight to those seraphic realms where all our sorrows end; if thy celestial spirit hovers over me, or flits amongst this ancient castle's misty darknesses—at once the pride and sepulchre of all our ancestors—inspire me with that heroic fortitude that has for twelve successive years made you the terror of your foes, the glory of your country, and the idol of your wife."

The attendants announced the approach of the council.

Alexina seated herself in a chair on a raised platform—a kind of throne, as it were, and on a cushion in another chair beside her was placed the well-known plumed-helmet of Count Tekeli. It was by that symbol she held her sway.

They gathered around her, the chief magistrates and dignitaries of the city, and the principal officers of the army, while she thus addressed them:

"My brave Hungarians, we are here assembled at a crisis more important than perhaps has yet occurred throughout the siege. On our decision hangs the fate of Hungary. Four months ago, I received this letter from Count Tekeli, from the Turkish court; it speaks in hopeful terms of promised aid and succour. This letter of Tekeli, and the promise of Turkish aid, ought well to be considered, lest, at the moment we have signed a treaty that for ever may destroy our fame, he may arrive with succour and assistance for us.

Say, then, my noble friends, whether it is better for us that we should be so bold that calm observers might declare us rash, or be so cautious that we must without resistance yield up the rights and freedom of our country. Speak! I shall abide your counsels. That monarch only is secure of conquest who rules his soldiers' hearts. Shall we withstand their efforts, and reject their offers? Our country's soldiers never make a treaty with the foe till they have conquered them."

It was evident that these stirring words created a powerful impression on the minds of the city magistrates.

While they deliberated upon them, word was brought that a messenger from the Austrian general, Count Debreztin, demanded an audience. Alexina had him conducted into her presence.

He was a captain of infantry—a young, brave-looking man.

He saluted her respectfully, and she bade him speak his message before the assembled council.

"Madam," he said, in compliance, "before the Count Debreztin makes his last attack, by which Montgatz must fall, his feelings prompt him to conduct himself towards you in such a manner as a female warrior's valour merits. He therefore sends me to propose a general pardon for yourself and garrison."

"Hold, sir," returned Alexina, haughtily; "did we accept a pardon, we should own that we were wrong. No, sir, the wrong is not with us. The emperor, your master, would deprive us of the privileges we have long enjoyed; he still contends we shall not choose our king, he will depute a viceroy; he also refuses us the exercise of our religion, and by the murder of our noblest lords, answers the treaties they were sent to make. These are the acts for which he offers us a pardon. No, sir, the land we live in can recur to all its ancient rights without the imputation of rebellion; to regain those rights is now our object, and until we do, the sword once drawn for liberty will not be sheathed. We fight for freedom—we gain it or we die!"

"Well said, madam," answered the captain, smiling somewhat disdainfully; "yet let not all these vain-built hopes of conquest lure you on. Do you suppose an army all victorious, high in the flush of health, and warm with triumph, can be repulsed by ranks of weak and enfeebled soldiers?"

"Enfeebled?" cried Alexina, indignantly. "Cast your eye around upon the brave men who circle you, whose dauntless valour for months has kept your host at bay before our walls. Do you see aught of feebleness there? Tell the Count Debreztin, if he is determined to possess Montgatz, they will exact a noble price for it."

It only needed for the Austrian captain to note how each Hungarian officer clutched his swordhilt, and the fierce gleaming of the sunken eyes—sunken from sleepless nights and wasting vigils—to read the continuation of her words.

"Your provisions cannot last," he said.

"We will not starve while there are any in your camp," answered Alexina.

"Your ammunition stores will soon be all expended, your ramparts will soon be a heap of ruins, your men will fall, and—"

"There will remain enough to close the gates while Alexina lives."

"Boast on, great lady; yours is the vain and empty hope of something yet to come; we speak upon the certainty of what we have. Tekeli, the brave, the great Tekeli is our saviour."

"Tekeli taken prisoner?" was the general exclamation, and it sounded like a wail.

That announcement was a death-blow to the hopes of all, and Alexina saw unless that feeling was counteracted all was lost.

"Hold, Hungarians!" she cried; "you are deceived. This is a deception of the foe—an airy fabrication to alarm the feelings of an anxious wife." She turned to the Austrian captain, adding, "No, sir, were Count Tekeli in your power, you would not ask a treaty, but demand one. You know that he is near us, and you fear lest he should gain admittance."

And even as she spoke, a murmur rose without. Nearer it came, and louder grew the noise, until it swelled into a shout. A thousand throats took up the cry—a cry of joy and exultation, and ever and anon one word rose shrilly above the general roar—"Tekeli! Tekeli!"

"You hear! you hear!" exclaimed Alexina.

The Austrian looked confused. All eyes were turned upon the portal, to see their hero-leader come. Soon he appeared, poorly apparelled, dust-stained, and worn with toil and care, yet still the noble brow, the eagle eye, and warrior form of Count Tekeli, followed by battle-scarred soldiers and famished citizens. Then the huge rafters of the old Gothic chamber echoed the cry without, as those within added their voices to the clamorous shout—"Tekeli! Tekeli!"

"Unhoped-for happiness!" cried Alexina, as she found herself once more clasped to that manly breast. "Did I not say so? My heart did not deceive me."

Proudly she turned to the Austrian captain. "Now tell Debreztin that Montgatz becomes impregnable."

"This transport is excusable," returned the captain. "I have now to say the Count Debreztin has commanded me to make it known he gives no quarter to Hungarians."

"Those are his orders, are they?" responded Tekeli. "Soldiers, hear Tekeli! When we attack, let mercy check our zeal, and yield that aid we have hitherto been wont to use; out of the field all murder is a crime; war is a curse to nations, and it is a heavenly task to soften down its horrors, and prevent the shedding of more human blood than more necessity requires."

"Believe me, sir," said the captain, apologetically, "I merely spoke the message; it grieves me I should be the bearer of it."

"Oh, sir," returned Tekeli, "we acquit you of all blame. You have your answer and can depart."

The captain courteously withdrew.

Tekeli turned to his followers.

"We may look for an immediate assault," he said, "but all is ready for the engagement. They say that it shall be the last. Hungarians, prove it so; and if the presence of your general, the man who loves you with his heart and soul, can add new vigour to that courage known and tried, that holds your hearts in keeping, follow my steps—I will be wherever danger calls. Behold our standard—mark the inscription, 'For God and for our country!' That is our motto, young Hungarians; and remember, it is your duty rather to die than yield this precious banner—this all-glorious mark of honour that so oft has flown in conquest. Now to your quarters, and prepare your men for battle. I will be with you straight."

The council was dissolved, and all retired—no sign of despondency on any face.

The most timid had grown bold, such mastery has one strong and daring mind over the weaker multitude.

Briefly Tekeli explained to Alexina the countless perils he had undergone, when, falling in his mission to the Turkish court, he had resolved, alone and in disguise, to penetrate the Austrian lines, enter Montgatz, and hold it to the last—to free it from opposing foes, or therein find a grave. Fortune had crowned the undertaking with success.

His story done, he armed him for the coming fight; and without one pang Alexina sent her hero forth.

He mustered his men in the grand square, and thus addressed them:

"My noble friends, the hour has come which must decide your country's fate. Consider this, and firmly strike the blow that stamps your liberty or subjugation. This emperor would rob us of our freedom and invade our rights; ambition leads him on; yet not that enervating zeal that raises men to deities, but that distracting, self-created power that seeks to level all beside itself—these are his hopes, his wishes these. It is ours to prove them vain. Let them advance, for thus united in ourselves, our hearts beating high with loyalty and honour, we fight like lions for our hallowed land! No force can equal this—composed of all our chiefest citizens, who boldly now step forth in danger's front to serve their country—heroic volunteers in freedom's cause!"

Inspired by these words, the soldiers sought their posts with hearts elate and full of hopeful daring. The citizens mustered, and formed themselves in companies, to aid in the defence.

A new spirit had entered Montgatz with Count Tekeli, and though he came single-handed, he was himself a host.

Soon the thunders of war broke again over those dismantled walls.

The Austrian legions came on like the fierce surges of an angry sea.

Wave after wave they dashed in fruitless fury against those well-defended ramparts.

Beaten back, the Hungarians, in their turn, became the assailants.

Tekeli led them forth, and hurled them with resistless force upon the wavering foe, disheartened by their bloody repulse from the walls.

His arm struck down Debreztin, in the midst of his body-guard, who strove in vain to save him. That blow decided the day.

The Austrians fled, the battle changed into a rout, and when the sun sank, their scattered legions had become a multitude of flying fugitives, whilst the Hungarians returned, weary of slaughter and pursuit.

Thus was Montgatz, which a woman's courage had so long held defensibly, at last redeemed.

G. L. A.



THE STRANGER'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Seventh Marriage," "The Warning Voice," "Man and his Idol," &c.

CHAPTER LXXVII

THE DEFENCE.

Thou think'st me guilty?

Sheridan Knowles.

It was long after midnight when Yool the Perjuror returned to his miserable home.

As he ascended a fifth flight of creaking stairs in the dark, a door above opened, and a woman came out with a candle in her hand. She was white, emaciated, and had a wasted infant at her breast.

"Oh, James!" she gasped, in a faint whisper, as he joined her, "I thought you would never come."

He took a sovereign from his pocket and placed it in her hand.

She looked at it surprised and frightened.

"Another!" she said. "Oh, how is this got?"

"Honestly!" replied Yool, in a tone implying his desire to cut short all discussion.

"But, James," said the wife, as she retreated into their one room, "you have no work, no friends, and now, where you used to bring shillings, you bring home gold!"

"I tell you," cried Yool, growing angry, "I get it honestly!"

"But you will not tell me how?"

"Confound the woman!" exclaimed the Perjuror.

"Isn't it enough that I bring it to you? Was it so pleasant to sit by the empty hearth starving—always starving all the long winter days and nights? Isn't it enough that two of our little ones have died of no disease—but hunger? God help us! Hunger—in a land of plenty! My poor boys! My poor, starved boys!"

He dropped into a chair, and hiding his face in his hands, cried long and bitterly—cried as a child cries. And the wife, kneeling at his feet, and putting her arms about his neck, tried to comfort him, to wean him from the memory of his dead children to the sense of her love and the blessing of the little one yet at her breast. In this she at length succeeded; or, perhaps, the paroxysm of his grief passed over. So, in time, they sat and talked; but not with that unreserved frankness and sympathy which constitutes the charm of married life. The knowledge of his infamous means of existence weighed down the man, and

[Yool the Perjuror brings home his gains.]

the fact of there being a secret between them filled the woman with a vague, haunting terror. She strove to believe him when he declared that the money he brought her of late was honestly obtained, and yet she could not. He was so changed, his habits had grown so secret, so strange, and unwonted, that she could only attribute it all to something wrong.

Poor soul! All this was hard to bear, and yet what was it compared to a knowledge of the truth? That would have killed her. That would have broken her loving heart; for she *did* love her husband. Yes; woman's love sanctifies many strange idols, and there was a heart that hoarded all the riches of its affection for Yool the Perjuror!

The two days passed away, and the assizes to which reference have been made were opened: on the second day of them, Gabriel Edgecombe was arraigned at the bar for the murder of John Harwood, known as Neville Onslow.

It is not necessary that we should go into the details of the trial.

There is a monotonous sameness about the proceedings of criminal courts, and in its opening, at all events, this did not offer any contrast to ordinary trials of the same nature. It will suffice, therefore, to indicate a few points to pave the way for results to be recorded more at length.

Sir Noel Edgecombe had at first treated the charge against his son as monstrous, and as supported by evidence which it would be easy to rebut. His firm conviction was that circumstances would offer such an elucidation of Neville Onslow's death as would exonerate Gabriel from all blame. Of course he did not believe his son guilty; not that he had any reason for declining to entertain that belief, but because he chose to take a high and indignant view of the question.

This was often matter of serious dispute between his lordship and Dorian. The latter was convinced that any jury would find Gabriel guilty; but Sir Noel would not take that view until the concurrent opinion of the Fimkide, senior and junior, made him waver in his opinion. Then he saw the policy of engaging the best and most renowned counsel of the day, and in sparing neither trouble nor expense in the endeavour to secure his son's acquittal.

Those were dreary, miserable days which Flora and her lady mother spent at the great, rambling, old inn of the assize town, impatient for the trial, yet dreading its approach.

The room they occupied was large, without being imposing; overcrowded with great, lumbering, old

furniture, yielding neither grandeur nor comfort. And as relief to the overpowering dreariness of the inn, there was only, by way of look-out, the hideous County Hall, where the assizes were held, and all the approaches to which were now thronged by the lowest and most depraved mob that could possibly be collected together.

Sir Noel himself was almost always with his lawyers, or with the county magistracy, with whom, however, his peculiar and distressing position rendered it impossible for him to be on his usual terms of friendly intercourse.

The only visitor who broke the solitude of the dreary hours which mother and daughter spent together was Doctor Dorian, and he was so greatly changed as to be hardly himself.

Moody, abstracted, and wandering, he only awoke into life—into a fierce, unnatural life—at the mention of Cheney Tofts' name, or when his wife was by any chance alluded to. Then his manner was more than startling—it was alarming. Why this should be so he did not explain, and absorbed in their own troubles, they had not the heart to inquire.

At last the day arrived. The trial was called on, and Gabriel Edgecombe stood at the bar on the most serious of all charges.

He presented a sad spectacle. Pale and thin, with wandering eyes, and twitching muscles, he seemed to have passed through years of agony, and to have survived only as the wreck of his former self.

To the charge against him he was instructed to plead "not guilty."

This he did in a low, faint, quavering voice—not with the air and tone of an innocent man, but rather as if he spoke to give himself the chance of saving a life which appeared even to himself hardly worth the saving.

The murmur ran round the crowded court that he was guilty and ill. How little did those who settled the point thus flippantly know that it was neither a sense of guilt nor bodily ailment which had brought him to what he was. The disease from which he suffered was the most fatal of all the ills that can attack humanity.

He was ill—dying of a broken heart.

The unhappy passion of his life for Blanche Selwyd was proving fatal to him.

The case against the prisoner did not occupy much time in submitting to the Court. The facts lay in a small compass. The scene of the unfortunate water-party was conjured up afresh. Lady Edith's Island was described as it appeared on the fatal evening, its mists taking strange, fantastic forms in the light of the

rising moon. The arrival of the boats at the island was described, and the fact that the prisoner had been the first to induce Neville Onslow to accompany him on to the island assumed that undue prominence which trifles always somehow gain in evidence, distorted by the light of subsequent events.

The report of the pistol, followed by Gabriel's reappearance alone, and uttering unmeaning cries, such as, it was contended, could only have been dictated by horror at a deed of blood just committed, produced a marked effect on the court. Why, it was naturally argued, should the prisoner have fled from the scene of a great crime, except that his courage failed him in the moment of its perpetration, and rendered it impossible for him to witness the result of his own act?

In that moment during which the two supposed friends disappeared from the observation of the rest of the party, one of them received his death-wound. About that, it was shown, there could be no question. And by whose hand was that wound inflicted? Suspicion pointed with unerring certainty to the prisoner, and suspicion was confirmed by the conclusive fact that where he had been—where his footsteps could still be traced—there was found one of a pair of pistols clearly and unmistakably his property. One of these had just been discharged; and Gabriel himself had offered no explanation as to how it could possibly have come where it was found.

Not given directly in evidence, it nevertheless came out in the case that Gabriel's victim was in some degree his adversary, inasmuch as he had supposed, or might fairly have supposed, that he was the claimant to the property to which Gabriel was heir. Nor did the counsel for the prosecution fail to insinuate into his case the idea that a love-rivalry had intensified the feelings of animosity between the prisoner and the dead.

Such, in brief, was the case.

In order to its completeness, two witnesses should have been called who were not in court. One was Cheney Tote, who had sent a medical certificate as the excuse for his non-appearance. The other was the prisoner's sister, Flora, who by a mutual understanding, was spared the pain of giving evidence against her own brother, more especially as the counsel for the defence did not dispute the facts of the case against the prisoner.

No, he did not dispute the facts.

On rising to address the court he distinctly stated that it was impossible, he said, to deny that his client was on the island, was last seen with the murdered man, behaved in a strange and suspicious manner, and left strong evidence of his guilt in the weapon found immediately after the murder. These were points not to be disputed or argued away, and yet on his advice the prisoner had pleaded "Not guilty." Now, why had he done this? A man, it would be said, must either have committed a crime or not have committed it; and when the evidence of his guilt was overwhelming, and he was not prepared to offer a little evidence to rebut it—as was the case in this instance—it might be thought that the more honest and straightforward course would be to plead guilty. But, so far as his client was concerned, there was a special reason why that course was impossible, or rather, why it was altogether unavailing and out of the question. The simple truth was that the prisoner at the bar was absolutely and entirely unable to say of his own knowledge, whether he had or had not taken this man's life!

A murmur of disapprobation went round the court as the counsel reached this point.

It was felt that he offered an insult to the common sense of all present by venturing such an assertion.

"That is a singular statement," the presiding judge remarked, elevating his eyebrows in a significant manner.

The learned counsel admitted it. He knew the singularity of his defence, and was prepared to meet both surprise and opposition. Nevertheless, it was founded on truth and justice, and he dared not shrink from submitting it. He repeated, therefore, that his client was ignorant whether he had or had not committed the crime with which he stood charged, and was therefore entirely at the mercy of the evidence before the court. The simple and painful truth was this. The young man before them inherited what he was not overstepping the bounds of propriety in terming the curse of the Edgcombe family. Those among the gentlemen of the jury who lived in that part of the country could not be ignorant of the opprobrious title which the prisoner's family had long borne. They were called the Evil Edgcombes. It would have been nearer the truth if instead of "Evil" they had been designated "Unfortunate"; for unfortunate they were, in the deepest sense of the word. Unfortunate in that, with their ancient blood and princely estates, they inherited a terrible malady; unfortunate inasmuch as this, their family secret,

draw down upon them, not the sympathy, but the remorseless condemnation of all around them.

In a word, the curse of the House of Edgcombe was neither more nor less than a peculiar form of—madness!

The eyes of all present wandered from the counsel to the accused, and indignation was still evidently the prevailing feeling. Indignation at the insult offered to their eyes, their reason, their common sense.

"The defence is, a plea of insanity, then?" the judge asked, with a smile.

"It is," was the serious answer.

"Well, go on."

Feeling that he stood alone, the counsel proceeded.

"Before going further," he said, "I will read to you a few lines from a book by a medical writer, a great authority on insanity, on a peculiar and special form which that malady sometimes assumes. His name, in these cases, the patient retains so much of the reasoning faculty that the delusions of the senses are recognized by him as such, and he remains capable of exercising so much control over himself, as either to resist whilst the impulses consequent on these delusions, or to seek the aid of others to do so, when he finds the effort too great for his unassisted fortitude."

"Now, this precisely describes the nature of the malady under which the prisoner at the bar has suffered from his birth; not constantly, but in paroxysms, in attacks, seizing him when least expected, but generally as the result of strong excitement. It is contended that this form of mental affection is curable. It may be so; but in this instance it has gone from bad to worse, until when the fits are on him, the prisoner loses all control over himself—he is, in a speak, carried over the precipice, conscious all the while of where he is going, and of the danger which besets him. This, being so, it is impossible for the prisoner to assert, with any certainty that he is innocent of this offence. He might or he might not have committed it. There was, we have it in evidence, a conversation respecting a phantom haunting Lady Edith's Island. It was believed by some that this phantom made its appearance, and there was great excitement, consequent on several persons rushing with cries on shore. That was precisely what would affect the mind of this unfortunate man, and bring on one of his paroxysms. What followed he cannot tell; but of this there can be no question—he is innocent of the crime laid to his charge, so far as the law is concerned, seeing that if it was indeed his hand that took the life of an unfortunate fellow being, he did it without that felonious motive which would render the act murder."

This statement created a profound sensation. In the midst of it the barrister called Doctor Dorian as the first witness in support of the case for the defence.

A pathway was made for the witness; but before he could appear, a letter was handed by the usher of the court across to the clerk of arraigns, who handed it to the judge.

His lordship opened it, read it, and then rose and turned towards the jury.

"Gentlemen," he said, "a remarkable, a very remarkable circumstance has transpired with regard to this case. You will probably be relieved from a very painful duty."

The silence of the grave prevailed in the court as all waited with intense curiosity for what was about to happen.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

WHAT THE LETTER CONTAINED.

That I am gullible . . .
It shall be level to your judgment pierce
As day does to your eye. *Hamlet.*

The letter handed in to the judge during the trial of Gabriel Edgcombe was of a singular nature.

It bore the signature of two medical men of eminence, both personally known to his lordship, and having therefore special as well as general claims on his attention.

Besides the letter proper there were two enclosures. We will first state the purport of the letter itself.

It was addressed from Nestleborough, and informed his lordship that the writers had on the preceding evening (when it bore date) been called in to attend a patient, or rather to sign a certificate, and to witness a statement made in their presence.

The name given by the patient was—Baljol Edgcombe!

He was a young man, the letter went on to say, and had been suffering from fever attended with delirium. Two or three days very severe and had brought him to the verge of the grave. He had, however, partially recovered, when, during the last day or two, he had immoderately exposed and over-exerted himself,

which had occasioned a relapse, and the danger of this had been increased by his being suddenly made acquainted with the facts set forth in his deposition. His natural desire was to proceed at once to the assize town so as to give evidence before the court; but this was considered highly dangerous and impracticable, and the attendance of a magistrate had therefore been procured, in whose presence the enclosed deposition had been made and sworn to.

The deposition mentioned ran in these terms:—

"I, Baljol Edgcombe the younger, sometime and commonly called Neville Onslow, do make oath, that I am at the time of making this my deposition, living and residing in the house of one Lola Mendez, in the town of Nestleborough. I further take oath and declare that I am the true and lawful son of Sir Baljol Edgcombe, of the Manor House, Sedgely, in the county of—"

This declaration bore the signature of the person making it.

But its object and importance were shown by the second enclosure, which was in the magistrate's handwriting.

These were the terms of it:—

"This is to certify that the accompanying deposition was made in my presence, and with the objects and intentions understood, namely: At having come to the knowledge of the document that a criminal charge has been preferred against one Gabriel Edgcombe, cousin to the said Baljol Edgcombe, and that the said criminal charge has reference to the alleged murder of him the said Baljol Edgcombe, this deposition is made with intent to arrest and set aside such criminal charge, and to free and exonerate the said Gabriel Edgcombe from all knowledge, complicity, or participation in the offence set forth in the indictment against him, and which has no existence in truth and in fact, inasmuch as the said Baljol Edgcombe is at the time of making this deposition alive and in the enjoyment of all his faculties. Further the deponent sets forth his name, condition, and relationship as his authority for the deposition made and witnessed before me this tenth day of October, 18—"

It need hardly be said that the reading of these documents produced the most profound sensation in court.

The prisoner listened with incredulous amazement. As to Sir Noel Edgcombe, he could not contain his emotions, but ejaculated, "Impossible!" boldly and energetically in the hearing of all. Though a way of escape for his son was thus opened, he could not, dared not believe in its reality.

Happily for her peace of mind, Flora was not in court, but remained at the dreary inn awaiting intelligence of the result of the trial.

Upon no one, perhaps, did the unexpected communication produce more real effect than upon the counsel for the prosecution; but that gentleman was too old and tried a hand to permit his emotions to be seen. He sat, with the set smile upon his sharp face, and the customary gleam on his white teeth, until the murmur rising through the court had subsided.

Then he darted up.

"There is clearly a mistake here, my lord!" he submitted.

"You think so?" was the judicial concession.

"No question about it, my lord."

"Indeed! In what does it consist?"

The barrister bent forward and replied in the undertone in which counsel always express themselves when they have anything to say which the spectators in court are particularly desirous of hearing.

"Your lordship will observe," he said, "that the deposition is signed Baljol Edgcombe, whereas the prisoner stands charged with the murder of one John Harwood."

"There would be weight in that objection," replied his lordship, "only it so happens that the very question was before the coroner, as to who Neville Onslow really was."

"And the evidence proved incontestably, my lord, that he was John Harwood, Martin Harwood's son. The father himself gave that testimony."

"Granted. But the circumstances of the case were peculiar, and not a little suspicious."

"Sufficiently so, your lordship thinks, to justify the admission of this singular element into the present trial?"

"Yes. On that ground."

The counsel bowed.

"That being so," he then continued, "I would submit another point for consideration—another and a most material point. As your lordship has observed, the circumstances of this case are very peculiar—as you have said, a question was raised before the coroner as to the real name and position of the person bearing the alias of Neville Onslow; but there was no question, so far as I am aware, but that the indi-

vidual known as Neville Onslow and the person found in the river were one and the same. In other words, whether the so-called Neville Onslow was rightly named Balliol Edgecombe or John Harwood, there was and there could be no question but that it was his body on which the coroner held his inquisition, his body which the jury saw as it lay dead, and his body for the burial of which the coroner's certificate was subsequently given. That being so, what is the court to say to the deposition of one who boldly declares himself the murdered man?

"There is," said his lordship, "I admit, something strange, not to say mysterious, about the matter; but the atmosphere of the case, so to speak, is full of mystery."

"Permit me," said the barrister, "to reiterate my point. The man is dead."

"Suppose we say a man is dead?"

"No. I must with submission insist on my own way of putting it. I say the man—that is to say—the man we charge the prisoner with having murdered, is dead. Of that we have incontestable proof. If ever anything was established in evidence before a jury, that was established before the coroner's jury. Then what is the value of this deposition? What does it mean? In what sense are we to understand it? For my part, I can come only to one out of three conclusions."

"And those are?"

"The first and most probable of them is that the deposition refers to another man altogether—I mean a man entirely distinct from the murdered man."

"You think that probable? Is it even possible?"

"I think so, under the peculiar circumstances of the case. Bear in mind that the so-called Neville Onslow, who perished, was known to have been in reality John Harwood. Bear in mind also—for this came out incidentally in evidence—that a person, hitherto known as Cheney Tofts, claims to be entitled to bear the very name which appears at the foot of these depositions—the name of Balliol Edgecombe. Now, why does he claim the right to bear that name? Clearly because there are advantages attached to it, namely, the right to a valuable estate. Very well, then, what is more probable than that a third person, with a knowledge of this fact, and with a knowledge also of the extreme difficulty of identifying the real heir of the house of Edgecombe, should have seized the opportunity of personating the lost heir, and asserting himself as a rival to the person named Tofts?"

"It is just within the bounds of possibility," observed his lordship.

"Yes, and it is with possibilities only that we have to deal, my lord, in this strange case. The court is asked to stay the progress of a trial for a capital offence, on the ground that the person alleged to have been murdered is alive, and capable of making a deposition before a magistrate. After that, it is useless to talk of confining ourselves to the likely and probable only."

"Well, well; you were about to offer a second solution of this mystery?"

"I was. This case has created great excitement in the public mind, and when that is the case we often find persons starting up with singular delusions. For example, the number of people who have falsely confessed themselves guilty of having committed great and secret crimes, of which they have been wholly innocent, is remarkable. So, I can imagine it likely that some individual, perhaps under temporary derangement of mind, consequent on illness, may have made this deposition entirely under the influence of delusion."

"That is ingenious," said the judge, with a smile. "People have imagined themselves great historical personages, living or dead, and persisted in that delusion, though sane and rational on every other subject."

"True. There is an instance of a monomaniac believing himself made of glass, who was afraid of drinking anything hot for fear he should crack." "He need have been under little apprehension on that ground, my lord; the injury must have been already inflicted."

A laugh rang through the court, as will often happen, when the most serious interests are in debate. It is a most curious thing, and most painful to the feelings of those interested, but some of the heartiest laughs ever raised in courts of justice have been heard during trials for murder. It was observed of a recent judge that he was always unusually facetious when the life of a fellow-creature was at stake.

The laugh having subsided, the counsel proceeded to submit that, if the two explanations he had offered were untenable, it remained only to be seen whether this deposition was not of the nature of a hoax, or designed to further some sinister purpose, the nature of which would ultimately become apparent. One thing was quite clear—and this was the point to which he desired to confine the court—there could

be no question as to the death by violence of the man, whatever name he went under, whom the prisoner was charged with having sent out of the world. And whereas this was certain and incontestable, he submitted that this interruption was most irregular and objectionable, and that the trial ought to be proceeded with.

On the part of the prisoner, it was of course urged that this was very undesirable, inasmuch as a communication such as that before the court deserved the gravest consideration, while nothing could be more painful to contemplate than the idea of a young man, of the rank in life to which the prisoner belonged, being convicted of a crime of which he might be—and in fact, morally was—entirely innocent.

The court hesitated, inclining to the prisoner, but not impressed by the arguments urged on the part of the prosecution.

In this crisis the foreman of the jury rose, either to put a question or to offer a suggestion.

He rose to his feet, bent forward, hesitated, put his hand to his brow, and then, with a groan, fell heavily against the front of the jury box.

They thought him dead.

In this they were mistaken. It was simply a fit; but of so serious a nature as to render his removal from the court necessary.

The effect of this was to settle the question under discussion in the most effectual way. The trial could not go on unless the twelve jurors were present; the absence of one of them, therefore, necessitated an immediate adjournment.

And this circumstance, so remarkable from the critical moment at which it happened, was long remembered and pointed out as a signal instance of the manner in which Providence sometimes directly interposes in the affairs of men.

The effect of it will be hereafter seen.

CHAPTER LXXIX

A PROPOSAL AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

The yellow poplar leaves came down
And like a carpet lay.
No wattings were in the sunny air
To flutter them away;
And he stepped on hyacinth and daisy
That warm October day.
Jean Ingelout.

BLANCHE SELWEN would not have been the woman, the true and loving woman she was, had she been indifferent to what was passing in respect to the man with whom it had at one time seemed inevitable that her fate would have been united.

It was "all off" between them, to use the common expression; but she could not forget the relation in which she had stood to Gabriel Edgecombe, nor could she remain indifferent to his fate.

Now that he stood upon his trial for a terrible offence, she often reproached herself for her conduct toward him. She saw, or persuaded herself, that all would have been different had she been different—had she been able to love him as she tried to do, and struggled more bravely against the passion for another, whose loss had overshadowed her young life.

If she found an excuse for herself it was in this, that Gabriel and all around him had been grievously to blame in concealing from her the terrible malady under which, it now appeared, he was suffering, and the consequences of which he had no right to inflict on another.

It might be said for him that his conscious madness was to an extent under his control, that the paroxysms were of rare occurrence except under excitement, and that he lived in the perpetual hope of outgrowing this, the curse of his race. And then his deep, consuming passion for Blanche might be pleaded in his behalf.

Still, enough of the terrible and the wrong remained for the fair girl to plead it in her justification, inasmuch as if she was herself "stunning," she had also been "sinned against," and that in no common measure.

Had Blanche never experienced in her own heart the effects of

The master passion, love, that still is lord of all, she might possibly have viewed Gabriel's conduct toward her in a sterner light. She might have blamed him more than she blamed herself. But as it was, she never forgot the one great plea in his behalf.

"He loved me," she would say to herself again and again. "He was truer to me than I was to myself. If it was wrong in him to indulge a passion which could only end in misery, what was I doing when I suffered him to believe that I returned his affection, while I only tried to feel what was foreign to my heart?"

Unfortunately, Blanche had not only regrets with which to occupy her mind—she had also misgivings. The "good-hearted" people had triumphed. Through Lord Englestone's illness, she had so en-

tangled herself in the net laid for her feet that she saw no way of escape from it.

The tacit promise Blanche had given her father had rapidly borne fruit.

A few days saw his lordship restored to convalescence, and then there could be no doubt that interviews took place between Major Torrens and himself, having for their object the union of Charlie, as he was called, and his lordship's daughter. Common decency forbade any rapid progress in this matter until Gabriel's trial was over, and the consequences of it, whatever they might be, had been to a certain extent forgotten. Still there was the intention, and its being carried into effect was only a question of time and opportunity.

This was rendered abundantly clear by the joyous and exultant bearing of Elsie.

That mature and romantic maiden, having given up the dream of her life—a handsome husband, who should elope with her in the orthodox fashion—seemed to have concentrated all her ambition on making a match for her huge, broad-shouldered brother.

They said of her in India that she had brought him into the matrimonial market like a sample of merchandises, and had endeavoured to get him off her hands in all directions as a remarkable bargain. It might be true: she certainly did admire him very much, love him very much, and was greatly concerned for his happiness.

She might have thought a good wife the greatest treasure she could secure for him, and have used all her influence with that view. But in this there was no vice, no selfishness. She was really and truly "good-hearted," and a devoted, though eccentric, sister.

Hence, at the first hint at the possibility of the realization of her wishes in regard to Blanche, she went into hysterical raptures.

Overtaking her in the orangery attached to the house, she threw her arms round Blanche's slim neck, and proceeded to kiss her in a frantic manner.

"Oh, you dear, dear, dear thing!" she burst out.

It was in vain that Blanche protested.

"Oh, you are so shy!" cried Elsie.

"Shy?"

Blanche repeated the question in genuine surprise.

"There! I knew you would!" cried Elsie.

"I knew you would fly out! Charlie did just the same. But I won't be offended. You can't affront me. I defy you, because I'm so glad—oh, so, so glad! But I think I'm entitled to a little confidence, because I am his sister."

So she rattled on.

Her face blooming and radiant, with a sparkle in the blank eyes, and a smile playing like sunshine over the fat cheeks.

Blanche, naturally timid, naturally shy and retiring, would have given anything to free herself from her too boisterous and demonstrative companion; but it was clearly in vain.

"What did he say?" Elsie abruptly asked.

"You mean your brother?"

"Of course."

"I have scarcely seen him since my father's illness."

"Then he hasn't—you know?"

"He has said nothing to me."

Elsie set up a kind of cry of vexation, and shook both her hands as an impatient child might do.

"Oh, Charlie, Charlie!" she burst out, "how tiresome you are!"

It was impossible for Blanche to resist laughing.

"I won't affect not to understand your meaning," she then said. "It would be childish to do so. You have heard that a certain arrangement affecting your brother's interest and my own has been come to between the major and my father."

"Yes—oh, yes, and I am so glad. But poor, stupid Charlie—"

"Has not spoken to me on the subject."

"No. A stupid boy—"

"But you must remember that he has had very little opportunity to do so, and moreover there are reasons which might naturally have restrained him."

But Elsie would have nothing to do with these apologies.

"Oh, I haven't patience with him," she said, smiling, yet vexed. "A pretty sort of a lover he is! Why, whenever did one want for opportunities? All that were well worth calling lovers made their opportunities. They attacked the ladies of their love, overwhelmed them with their ardour, silenced their scruples, smothered their objections with embraces, carried them off and married them, before they could say Jack Robinson! Oh, I haven't patience with him!"

Blanche smiled, but it was a melancholy smile.

"Give him time," she said. "I dare say he will speak out to your satisfaction."

"And yours, I hope. But you do like him. You must. He is so good-hearted—"

"Yes."

"And when he speaks, you will answer him like a dear, good, kind soul as you are—won't you, won't you, dear?"

Blanche made some kind of answer, she hardly knew what, that satisfied her tormentor, who thereupon released her and went her way.

Went her way, too, perfectly satisfied that she had managed that interview with the skill, tact, and delicacy of an accomplished diplomatist!

Not for a moment did she suspect that the sensitive girl whom she had just overwhelmed with her impetuosity felt a shock, a sense of repugnance at this plain out-speaking on so delicate a subject as that of an affair of the heart. Yet the truth was that Blanche Selwyn shrank with a nervous apprehension from the moment when Charlie Torrens should approach the subject of his claims.

At last it came.

A passing hour of sunshine lit up the gloom of an October morning—it was the morning after Gabriel's trial—and gave surpassing splendour to the autumnal foliage of Englestone Park. The yellow leaves changed to gold, those of a redder tint became beautiful as flowers, while a metallic brilliance was upon the shining holly and laurel, and the rest of those hardy evergreens that freshen at the approach of winter.

So tempting was the sunshine that Blanche, escaping from the torture of entertaining her father's guests, quitted the mansion by a private door, and betook herself to what was called the Poplar Walk, a retired avenue, the gravel path of which was now hidden beneath fallen leaves.

Half-a-dozen brisk turns in the fresh air was all she proposed to herself; but hardly had one length of the avenue been traversed, before, on turning her head, she perceived that she was not alone.

Some one had stepped in from between the poplars.

It was Charlie Torrens.

There could be no mistaking his bold step, and the martial swing of his long legs, no, nor his handsome head set on the shoulders of an athlete. He had a gun under his arm, muzzle downwards, and the velvet cap and jacket which he wore, together with substantial leggings, showed that he was out shooting.

His manner as he approached Blanche was unusually awkward and embarrassed.

It was clear that he had made up his mind to speak on a subject which ties the tongues of most men. And having intended to speak on that subject, it was, perhaps, the most natural thing in the world that he should start off upon another, as wide as possible from it, and should find himself drifting farther and farther away in a hopeless attempt to give the conversation a turn in the desired direction.

Thus it happened that they walked side by side, to and fro, between the poplars, until Blanche intimated her intention to return to the house.

Then Charlie plunged into the thicket of what he had to say, with a bright cheek, and tingling ears, and a consciousness of awkwardness, such as comes over most men once, and often only once, in the course of their lives.

"I had intended, that is I presumed—I—I," he found himself blundering on—"I had thought this an opportunity for approaching a subject of great moment to me—to my happiness."

Blanche turned away a troubled face.

"I had hoped that during the time I have been Lord Englestone's guest, I might have become not altogether indifferent to—to—"

"To me?"

"Yes. Thank you. Yes; may I hope—"

"May I say two words to you?" said Blanche, in a low, earnest voice. "Will you forgive me if I speak to you frankly and fairly, as a sister might address a brother?"

"Oh, delighted!" he exclaimed.

"I am afraid a milder term will express your feeling when you have heard me," the trembling girl replied. "The position in which you have placed me would, under any circumstances, be an embarrassing one. To me, knowing all I know, it is painfully so. I have learned for some time that it is the wish of the major and my father that our families should be united. Hitherto my father's wishes have been laws. I have obeyed them implicitly, and I am disposed to try and do so in this case. But it is only right—it is only just towards you—that I should say, what it is hard to say to another, that should I give you my hand, I could not pretend to offer you my heart. It is a painful, it is a humiliating confession to make, but it is better made. I will not say that you are wholly indifferent to me. You have qualities which I can appreciate, and a kindly nature, which is always appreciated by a woman. Your devotion touches and gratifies me; but I cannot pretend that it awakens in my heart that feeling with which you have a right to expect the heart of your wife to be animated. In a

word, while I appreciate your good and noble qualities, I dare not feign that I love you."

It was a singular speech to come from the lips which uttered it, and the speaker ceased with a heightened flush on her soft cheeks, showing the exertion it had cost her. Charlie looked on, dumb and utterly disconcerted.

"When you have known me longer—" he ventured at length to say.

"It will be the same."

"You give me no hope, then?"

"In that respect—none."

"And you refuse me?"

"Nay, what can I say to you more than I have said? I have told you the truth—the simple, honest truth. Not willingly, dear, heaven knows, to wound your feelings; but while, out of consideration for my father, I am impelled towards a certain course, I dare not take it with any compromise of truth, or under any false showing whatever. My own peace, my own future happiness would forbid this; still more would consideration for what is due to you, and to the feelings which prompt you to speak as you would have spoken to-day."

"Oh, Miss Selwyn!" cried the infatuated Charlie, "I love you better than ever for those noble words. And if you will only have me, only say 'yes,' I'll take the chances of what'll follow. I know you'll be such a wife to me as I shall never find in all the world besides, and if you don't hate me and detest me now, why you may come to like me in time, and then, as we get along side by side, who knows but that you may— Oh, now I've said what I oughtn't, and you're angry, and it's all over between us!"

Blanche had turned away because the pleading words of this manly but uncouth suitor had brought the tears into her eyes; but there was no feeling of anger in her heart, and she hastened to assure him of this.

"And you will promise?"

He was in the act of speaking these words, when, to his confusion, his sister Elsie dashed, in hot haste, into the avenue.

Directly she saw what was happening, she came to an abrupt stand-still.

"Oh, bother!" she exclaimed. "I've spoilt it all now!"

Charlie's blank face confirmed that view of the case.

"And I was only coming with news that would have kept well enough."

"With news?" asked Blanche.

"Yes. Such odd news about Gabriel—you know—Edgcombe. Now, Charlie, don't give that jealous start, for there's no occasion. It's all over between them, isn't it, darling?"

Blanche assented.

"But," she asked, anxiously, "what is the news you spoke of?"

"Why, the morning papers are just in, and they say the trial's put off."

"Ha! For what reason?"

"Well, as near as I can make out, because it turns out that the man who was supposed to be murdered—Neville Onslow, wasn't his name—is alive!"

"Alive!"

The word came from the lips that uttered it in a wild, piercing shriek.

"Yes; but—"

It was too late for explanation. Blanche was lying in Elsie's arms, white and rigid as a corpse.

(To be continued.)

A NOBLE WOMAN.—The Queen of Spain has published a letter in which she says that her physicians having, out of regard to her present condition, forbidden her to go to Madrid as she had wished, she has placed a million of reals—about £40,000—at the disposal of the Government for the relief of the surviving relatives of the poorer victims of the cholera.

THE HOP CROP OF THIS YEAR.—When the duty on hops was in existence, the amount levied each autumn by the Inland Revenue at once formed the data as to the aggregate bulk of hops grown and cured in English counties, and the hop-growers held these returns of excisemen in high importance, as forming a key to the standard value of hops, but since the remission of the impost the hop-growers have to estimate average growths from statistical information at local hop-fairs and markets. The hop crop of the past season was the most promising and heaviest for several years past, but a succession of rain in August destroyed the crop on many plantations, and made the young hops light and chaffy, and many hundreds of acres became valueless and were not gathered, but in the aggregate the bulk of this season was the heaviest since 1855, when an impost (old duty) of £298,365 was paid on the product of 57,757 acres of land then under hop cultivation. In the year 1859 many hop-gardens had

been grubbed up, and the land cultivated in the growth of hops reduced to 43,729 acres, but a yield of hops above the average was picked and cured, and a sum of £228,000 paid as old duty. Last year (1864) it was calculated that hops were grown equivalent to £280,000 (old duty) and in the present year in some of the best districts in Kent from 20 to 27 cwt. to the acre was picked, and other counties had a yield of from 8 to 18 cwt.; and excepting the many plantations which were not stripped, the bulk of hops gathered and cured this season represents an equivalent to £380,000 (old duty), and since the remission of the hop-duty hop-grounds have been extended, and 53,000 acres of land are under hop cultivation, and the present low value of corn has this autumn instigated farmers to the conversion of corn land into hop-gardens.

THE GREAT SWEET-CHESTNUT TREES OF MOUNT ETNA.

IN June, 1811, being employed on the Quarter-master-General's Staff in Sicily, and engaged in making surveys of various localities, I visited Mount Etna, and of course did not neglect to examine that vegetable wonder, the Castagno di Cento Cavalli, which seemed to me, as it had done to other travellers, not what was expected—a single tree—but apparently a cluster of five distinct trees, since reduced, I understand, to three.

A late traveller has remarked, and I think with good reason, that a large tree may have existed on the spot, and that on its destruction in some of the many convulsions that have so often shook Etna to its very centre, the present cluster of trees sprang from its root.

But it is not of the Castagno di Cento Cavalli that I am about to speak; it is of a more wonderful production of nature, in my opinion, which stands within a few hundred yards of that celebrated tree; it is the Castagno la Nave, a noble patriarch of the forest. This tree rises in an unbroken stem for about forty feet, then divides, and throws out lateral branches to an enormous extent. It appeared to me as I viewed it to be comparatively a young tree, from the vigour of its growth and absence of decayed branches. I was accompanied by a friend, and after contemplating with admiration this splendid specimen of the vegetable kingdom, we proceeded to measure it with a surveying-tape, and at four feet from the ground it measured fifty-four feet in circumference. I need scarcely add, that I entered this measurement in my note-book.

I took a drawing of the Castagno di Cento Cavalli, which shows almost beyond a doubt that this never was a single trunk but a group; but from some cause which I do not now remember I neglected to add its noble companion to my other sketches; but I afterwards saw at Messina a very beautiful drawing of this tree in the portfolio of my friend Lieutenant Wright, of the Royal Staff Corps.

On reading "Murray's Handbook of Sicily," which has been recently published, it is there stated that this very tree was carefully measured within the last year, and was found to be fifty-seven feet in circumference at three feet from the ground, nearly at the same height that I measured it, thus showing an increase in girth of three feet in fifty-three years. If, therefore, we take for granted that the growth was the same every fifty-three years, the calculation makes the tree now 1,007 years old. But if we presume that the tree increased in bulk somewhat more than three feet in fifty-three years in the early period of its growth, which by-the-by does not appear to be generally the case, for I have examined the annual rings in the trunk of many newly-cut down trees, and found them on an average of equal thickness throughout, except towards the south or sunny side, where are they generally thicker, on the same principle that plants grown in a window will always increase more towards the light; but even allowing this, it would still make the tree nearly 1,000 years old—no contemptible age; and although it is now showing symptoms of decay, for it is said to be partly hollow, yet it is not impossible but what it may, if the lavas of Etna spare it as they have hitherto done, live some five or six centuries more.—*Captain Smith.*

THERE has been lately much discussion about the longevity of the human race, and some recorded and generally credited instances of very extreme old age have been called in question by sceptical persons. There are, however, numerous cases, well authenticated, of persons exceeding a whole century. One has just occurred in the parish of Spexhall, Suffolk. A labouring man of the name of Charles Page has died there, aged 105 years. His case was remarkable in several respects. To the very last his complexion presented a youthful and florid appearance, without a single wrinkle, and he never (to his knowledge) had taken physic in his life, his rule being to

fast when at all indisposed until his usual sound health returned. He always asserted that he never had a serious illness in his life. Her Majesty the Queen, with her usual benevolence, sent, through Colonel the Hon. Sir C. B. Phipps, a short time prior to the old man's death, to the rector of the parish, the Rev. Charles Craven, a donation of £5, with a request that he would lay it out for the benefit of the centenarian. It made his latter days very comfortable in providing him with warm clothing, wine, &c., and the cheerful old man frequently expressed his gratitude to Her Majesty for the seasonable gift.

THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

(Continued from No. 133.)

Our country cousins, when they come to town, for the greater part make a point of visiting the Foundling Hospital. If they miss the sights and sounds to be seen and heard there, they conclude that they have not "done" London thoroughly; and we believe they are right, for, to our mind, it is one of the most interesting institutions in, or near the metropolis. Many Londoners know little or nothing of the Foundling Hospital, we believe, either as regards its locality, objects, character, or management. This much, in their service, we are able to say, from inquiry and experience, that anyone who wishes to know anything about it will, on application, find open doors and perfect transparency and accessibility in relation to accounts, management, teaching, and everything else connected with the institution.

The stranger who may visit the Foundling Hospital for the purpose of attending Divine Service on a Sunday, or on any other day or occasion, will find the hospital at the end of Lamb's Conduit Street. In the centre of the front of the hospital grounds is a fine statue of Captain Thomas Coram, the founder; and on each side there is a porter's lodge, one only of which is used as an entrance. An immensely wide carriage road, with paved footways on each side, leads up to the hospital. Spacious, well-kept lawns flank the carriage-way on each side, and along the outer boundaries of the grounds to the front are covered buildings open to the lawns, with gymnasia, &c., in which the children take exercise in wet weather.

The hospital presents a deeply-recessed central front, with a very extensive wing on each side. The right wing contains the dining-rooms, school-rooms, and play-rooms for the girls; and the left wing similar accommodation for the boys.

The principal central building is occupied by the chapel, which is really a district church, and as such is well-attended. A piazza under the main walls extends along the back and front of the chapel, this covered way being occupied in the interior by the chapel gallery. The windows of the chapel are consequently in the upper portion of the back and front walls, and quite inadequate to the sufficient lighting of the space within. Stained glass is effectively introduced in the chapel windows, and the light, whether religious or not, is certainly dim enough. The antique style and finish of the building, and the modern gas lights, used frequently in the morning service, furnish a striking contrast.

Service, on Sundays, commences in the morning at eleven o'clock, and the visitor will find, a quarter of an hour before that time, a congregation of about 300 children, about 150 of each sex, seated on each side of the end gallery, which has the organ in the centre, and is behind the reading-desk and pulpit, at one end of the chapel.

There are galleries on each side, and a spacious gallery at the end, opposite the choir, and above and behind the altar. The chapel is so constructed that there are no seats under the galleries, either at the sides or ends. The roof in front of the gallery is supported by Ionic columns, with an open balustrade all round the rectangular space. The principal ceiling of the chapel is covered and enriched with a denticulated cornice and sunk panels, with ornamental borders and centre-pieces. Behind the altar there is a fine painting by Benjamin West, illustrative of the text, "Suffer little children to come unto me." The principal end gallery is very effective, having three arches in front, supported on pairs of columns. The prevailing colour in the interior of the chapel is a warmish stone tint, and the edifice is in all respects well fitted for its desired uses.

Seated in the chapel some ten or fifteen minutes before service commences, one can look about and notice the congregation as they enter. Many of the entrants are evidently the élite of this once aristocratic, and still highly respectable, neighbourhood, and regular pew holders. Others are probably London casual visitors, who, in some instances, take possession of the best private pews, from which, however, the apparitor, as he notices, at once displaces them. Others again are evidently from the country, and wait humbly

and patiently for places, which are willingly found for them.

The hour for service having arrived, the ecclesiastical persons concerned, two priests and the clerk, enter in procession, while a truly brilliant voluntary is being performed by the organist. The organ is of exquisite tone, and the dextrous manipulation of the performer, as well as his fine taste as regarded light and shade, and his expression, on the occasion of our hearing him, were most remarkable.

Before the commencement of the service almost the whole of the congregation had, as was most meet, taken their places, and as vacancies were left in the pews the apparitor with excellent discrimination promoted the ladies, casual worshippers, from the forms, without back rests, which they occupied in the aisle and in front of the altar, to the comfortable enclosed pews.

The children in the end gallery present a very striking appearance, especially the girls, who are dressed in stuff frocks and have white aprons with bibs, and high-crowned white caps of old Norman fashion, which reminded us of the peasantry of the north of France more than of anything English we know of. We are glad to learn that the governors propose to abolish the antique head-dress of the girls, and to set a good example—much needed—to the directors of some other charities, by clothing the children in a style less *outré* and *bizarre* than that of last century.

The boys are clad in brown cloth jackets and trousers, with scarlet vests, the brass buttons bearing the hospital crest, a lamb with a sprig of thyme in its mouth.

At the commencement of the service the children rise, with wonderful precision, on a signal from the teachers. The choir consists of a quintet of professionals, each of high quality, assisted by these 300 children, and the service, as regards the responses and music, is peculiar and most effective. The girls furnish the soprano, the boys the alto. The musical drill of the children, as well as the drill of other kinds, appears to be very effective from the smoothness and precision of the service. The responses to the Commandments, delivered from the altar, are also very fine. The occasional singing of the Foundlings' Hymn is touching to the last degree.

On the occasion of our worshipping at the Foundling Chapel the choir delivered, magnificently, Kent's fine Anthem, Psalm ii. 1-6, "Why do the heathen rage?" The bass solo was an admirable performance—slightly inconsistent, however, with the equally admirable sermon which followed, on the text, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Some trenchant things were said in the sermon as to spiritual worship, which reminded us that we had listened with wrapt attention and delight to the anthem, but that it was not on our part an act of worship; that, however, was our fault.

The impressive service over, we found that the hospital was open to the public, and then, and subsequently, we have had great pleasure in the inspection of the art treasures, antiquities, and objects of interest which present themselves at the Foundling.

The hospital, it may be known, has an important relation to the development of the twin arts of painting and music. It may be regarded as the germ of the Royal Academy of Arts and of the Academy of Music. Hogarth and Handel were both of them munificent patrons, and were elected governors of the institution. To the Foundling Hogarth presented his celebrated picture, "The March of the Guards to Finchley," his portrait of Captain Coram, and numerous others of his best works, which are now preserved there.

In the Foundling Chapel the illustrious Handel "conducted" at the performance of his oratorios, devoting the proceeds to the hospital funds, sometimes netting as much as a thousand pounds. At the performance of May 1st, 1750, gentlemen were directed to come "without swords," and "ladies without whoops." In the end Handel bequeathed the MS. score copy by his own hand of his "Messiah," to the hospital, and this interesting document is to be seen there at this day. The quavers have curves at the bottom instead of the crooks as in printed music, and the MS. gives evidence of decided rapidity of execution.

Other distinguished artists of the period, Hayman, Highmore, Wills, and others contributed their works to the hospital, and its public rooms are now really one of the most interesting of the permanent exhibitions of works of art and antiquities in London.

In the great room the visitor will find many interesting objects, including Hogarth's punch-bowl, autograph letters of the late Prince Consort, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Coutts, the banker; Capt. Coram's pocket-book, 1728-9; letters of the late Sir Robert Peel, Warren Hastings, and other celebrated characters. Amongst the most attractive objects in this fine room is a pair of pictures of the founding *genre*, by the

accomplished daughter of the secretary, Miss Emma Brownlow.

In this and the adjoining rooms there are also some most interesting objects of art of other dates and character, including Raffael's cartoon, "The Murder of the Innocents," a superb Chelsea vase, a very fine piece of *alto relievo* sculpture over the chimney-piece, by Rysbrack, with a large number of very curious "tokens" left with children sent to the Foundling. The tokens include numerous coins, seals, strings of beads (some that look very like real pearls), porcelain brooches, cameos, pieces of bead work (one bearing the words "Cruel Separation," &c.). These tokens were ordered, September 7, 1757, as a means of detecting whether children despatched to the hospital had been "made away with."

As for the children, they appear to be very happy, after they get reconciled to the separation from their foster-mothers.

The infants, it may be stated, are sent to out stations, at East Peckham, Kent, and Chertsey, Surrey, where they are consigned to cottagers for nursing, but are diligently looked after also by inspectors and medical officers retained by the governors. Formerly the infants were detained at the out stations till they were about five years of age; now they are brought to the hospital at the age of from three to four years. Very distressing scenes are often presented when the children are brought away. The foster-mothers and the children have their hearts wrung by the parting, and even the foster-father in some cases rebels against the governors' power, and insists upon keeping his pet to be brought up in his own way.

There are about 300 children in the hospital, and about 160 infants at the country stations. About thirty children, fifteen of each sex, go out annually, and for the greater part do well in life, but the historical record is, as may be expected, imperfect; no man or woman who rises in the world will care to tell that he or she was a "foundling."

The hospital has a musical band of from thirty to forty members, and many of the boys trained in it are transplanted to some of the finest bands in Her Majesty's service. If we mistake not, numerous foundlings are serving in the Guards' bands, mounted and foot, the Artillery, the Marines, Engineers, and others.

The children are evidently very happy. At dinner they manage amongst them to dispose of twenty-two legs of mutton, with a couple of sacks of potatoes, at a sitting, as we noticed a few days ago. The "cattle plague" does not seem to trouble them in the slightest degree. They are for the greater part clean skinned, and all evidently well fed.

Originally the children were named after founders and patrons. The first boy received was named Thomas Coram, and the first girl was named after Captain Coram's wife. After these the names of patrons were given, and most illustrious cognomens were borne by many of the early foundlings. Amongst others they bore the names of the great families of Abercorn, Bedford, Bentinck, Montague, Marlborough, Newcastle, Norfolk, Pomfret, Pembroke, Richmond, Vernon, &c. Next in order, as regards the selection of names, came distinguished men in various walks, and the Foundling Hospital sent out number twos of Wickliffe, Huss, Ridley, Latimer, Laud, Tillotson, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon, &c.

Then again, in the case of stout lads likely to be fit for the sea, the names of admirals were given, and of other great public characters, and so foundlings were dubbed Sydney, Drake, Cromwell, Hampden, Bunbow, and Cloudesley Shovel. The governors sent out also their Peter Paul Rubens, their Vandyke, and Michael Angelo, Godfrey Kneller, William Hogarth, and did not forget Jane, his wife. Tom Jones, an appropriate though rather cruelly applied name, was not lost sight of; but the last, under a certain section of the management, was the queerest of all, "Kitty Finis."

All this is altered for the better now, and they have names given them which they can take out to the world without fear of ridicule. Whether there are any John Smiths we know not, but we believe that there are no Napoleon Bonapartes.

We take leave of these beautiful gentle girls and noble boys—the finest company of children we have seen as regards physiognomy—with earnest desire for their future happiness.

SOUTH AMERICAN BEEF.—Another attempt is being made to bring to Europe the immense supply of good meat wasted in South America. Mr. Liebert, of Hamburg, has, it is said, attempted the manufacture of Liebig's "extractum carnis," at Feray Bontos, in Uruguay, and sends home about 4,000 lb. yearly. He is now increasing his establishment, has concluded a contract with the British Admiralty, and hopes soon

to supply the extract at 16s. a pound. Each pound is the equivalent of 180lb. of meat, and will furnish broth for 128 men. The extract in its best state is absolutely free from fat or gelatine, and is now used very largely in Continental hospitals.

ILL-GOTTEN GOLD.—"Gold well gotten is bright and fair; but there is gold which rusts and cankers. The stores of the man who walks according to the will of God are under a special blessing; but the stores which have been unjustly gathered are accursed. Your gold and your silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat up your flesh as fire. Far better have no gold at all, than gold with that curse upon it. Far better let cold pinch this frame, or hunger gnaw it, than that the rust of ill-gotten gold should eat it up as fire. Perhaps you may, once or twice in your life, have passed a person whose countenance struck you with painful amazement. It was the face of a man, with features as of flesh and blood, but all hue of flesh and blood was gone, and the whole visage was overspread with a dull silver grey, and a mysterious metallic gloss. You felt wonder, you felt curiosity; but a deep impression of the unnatural made pain the strongest feeling of all which the spectacle excited. You found it was a poor man, who, in disease, had taken mercury till it transfused itself through his skin, and glistened in his face. Now, go where he will, he exhibits the proof of his disorder, and of the large quantity of metal he has consumed. If you had an eye to see the souls that are about you, many would you see—alas! too many—who are just like that; they have swallowed doses of metal—ill-gotten, cankered, rusted metal—till all purity and beauty are destroyed. Of all poisons and plagues, the deadliest you can admit to your heart is gain which fraud has won. The curse of the Judge is in it; the curse of the Judge will never leave; it is woe and withering, and death to you; it will eat you up as fire; it will witness against you. Ay, were that poor soul of yours, at this precise moment, to pass into the presence of its Judge, the proof of its money-worship would be as clear on its visage as the proof that the man we have described has taken mercury is strikingly plain upon him."

EVA ASHLEY.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCESSION.

AFTER her interview with the squire, in regard to Frank's visit to the Continent, to look after Leon's wife and child, Mrs. Ashley sought the apartment of Bessie, to communicate to her the news of the projected bridal trip.

Opposed as she was to a separation from her daughter, she hoped the promise of a Continental tour would reconcile her to the speedy marriage which had been arranged for her.

She found Bessie pacing the floor of her room, with cheeks flushed with weeping, and eyes in which the light of anger shone.

She did not often show the fiery spirit that was within her to the beloved and respected guide of her young life, but there had been occasions on which it broke forth and swept all opposition before it.

As soon as Mrs. Ashley looked at her, she saw that, for the present, all power over Bessie was at an end.

The young girl turned toward the opening door, and when she saw who had entered the room without knocking, she defiantly said:

"You took an unfair advantage of me, Minny, to carry out your own wishes. You knew that I dared not refuse my grandfather anything on which he seemed to have set his heart, for he looks so frail and wan, that thwarting him might kill him at once. If you had let things take their course, I could eventually have evaded this marriage, which, I tell you, it will be wrong for Frank and me to make."

Mrs. Ashley composedly asked:

"How would you evade it? I took no advantage of you, Bessie; do not think so harshly of me as that. You and Frank enacted that scene of love-making in our sight, and the squire and I naturally thought you were in earnest. At his command, I called you to come to us, that he might make known to you how much he has your immediate union at heart. Do not blame me, my dear, for it wounds me to the heart to have you imagine, even for a moment, that I would do anything that would render you unhappy."

Her voice assumed its most touching tones, and tears stood in her expressive eyes as she turned them on the impulsive girl, and Bessie threw herself in the arms that were opened to receive her, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Catch flies with honey, and not with vinegar," had been the rule of Mrs. Ashley's life, and annoyed

as she felt with the conduct of her daughter, she pressed her tenderly to her heart and whispered:

"I came hither to console you, love; to show you all the advantages of this union, and tell you something that your grandfather has decided on, which must afford you intense pleasure."

"Nothing can do that, if I am to give up the freedom of girlhood to marry Frank. I do not wish ever to be married, and I do not think that any girl should marry under twenty. I am but eighteen, and I have lived shut up in this old country house nearly all my life. If I go out in the world, I may hereafter see some one that I shall like a great deal better than Frank. It is wicked to force me into bonds that may become a burden to us, and I did not believe that you would help to do such a thing, Minny."

"My dear," said Mrs. Ashley, soothingly, "you are excited now, and you do not talk rationally. It is too absurd to speak of Frank and yourself as if you were two children, incapable of judging as to what is good for your own welfare."

"If we loved each other; but such is not the case with Frank and me. There is a strong bond of fraternal affection between him and myself, but the divine spirit of love has never breathed upon it. If you will force us into the path you have marked out for us, the day will come in which we shall both discover the fatal mistake we have made; we shall then loathe each other all the more for the irrevocable tie that unites us in a bond which, from that hour, will have no sanctity."

The passionate vehemence of the speaker showed Mrs. Ashley how deeply in earnest she was, but she lightly said:

"My love, your excitement has made you eloquent. I scarcely expected such a tirade on love from the lips of my little Bessie. If you are not a mature woman, it seems to me that you think and feel very much like one."

"Because this question was thrust upon me even in my childhood. I have always been assured that Frank must become my husband, and I have reflected on all the possibilities that may spring from a union based on such motives as ours will be; and the more I have thought on it the more have I shrunk from fulfilling the contract which has been made for me."

"Why did you not express all this to your grandfather when he spoke to you this evening, Bessie?"

"You know very well why I did not. The love and reverence I cherish for grandpa has a strong element of fear in it. Somehow I have always felt as if I have no right to give him any trouble, and the most submissive obedience to his will can never repay him for what he has done for me. He demanded my consent to marry Frank, and I gave it; I shall redeem my promise, much as I resent the manner in which it was wrung from me."

A slight shiver passed over Mrs. Ashley, and she changed colour, but she calmly replied:

"That will suffice, Bessie; but why you should imagine that you have no claim here is very strange. But for the efforts made by me to restore Frank to his grandfather's favour, you would have been sole heiress of Ashurst."

"I wish to heaven you had never done so, Minny; for I could have done justice to Frank after my grandfather's death, and avoided making myself miserable by marrying him."

"My dear, you will smile at the recollection of all this romantic nonsense when you are a little older. Let us not discuss your sentimental wrongs just now; for I have something more important to communicate to you."

Bessie sank resignedly into a chair, and said:

"I am ready to listen; I suppose it is some message from my grandfather?"

"Yes; I came hither from Squire Ashley to inform you that it has become necessary for Frank to go on his tour immediately, and you are to be his companion. Will not the prospect reconcile you to your speedy marriage?"

The young girl's face brightened a little, but she quickly said:

"If anything could do so, the promise of a visit to the Continent would have that effect; but from the depths of my nature something cries out to me not to give my hand to Frank Wentworth. The spirit within me seems to rise up in warning against a union which I feel assured will bring wretchedness to both of us."

Mrs. Ashley gazed on the excited face of the speaker with a feeling of dread creeping over her, which she found it impossible to dispel. What if Bessie spoke the truth, and all her machinations should only end in making her child so miserable that the wealth which had been so dearly purchased could never gild the sombre darkness of the fate to which she was so eager to consign her?

She presently spoke in a tone so altered that Bessie regarded her with surprise and contrition:

"My dear child, if it is not too late to recede, I will use my influence with the squire to have the

marriage postponed, at least, till after Frank's return. If you are really so bitterly opposed to giving him your hand, I—yes—I will use all the power I possess over my husband to induce him to change the tenor of his will, and leave you both free to accept or reject each other, as you may desire."

Bessie impulsively threw herself at her feet, exclaiming:

"My best friend—my mother than mother! If you will indeed do this, I shall be eternally grateful. We shall both owe you such a debt as we can never repay. Save me from this sacrifice, and I promise you in the future to be guided by you in the choice I may make; and I pledge myself to marry no other than Frank without your consent."

Mrs. Ashley raised her in her arms, and pressing her to her heart in deep emotion, she said:

"I will do my best, my darling, and you need have no fears for the result. But I do trust that when you find you are not compelled to take Frank, your caprices will end, and you will see that he is the best choice you can possibly make. Promise me that you will use every effort to overcome your fantastic repugnance to the union your grandfather so much desires, and I pledge you my word to do all I can towards having the provisions of the will changed."

Bessie's face was radiant; all the clouds had rolled away as if by magic, and she threw her arms around Mrs. Ashley, as she impulsively said:

"Only save me now, Minny, and two years hence I may willingly give my hand to Frank. Only give me time to understand myself—to make up my mind that we can be happy together, and I ask no more."

At that moment a knock was heard upon the door, and Mrs. Ashley extricated herself from the embrace of Bessie as she said:

"I firmly believe that your decision will ultimately be all that I can wish, or I should not willingly undertake what I have promised. You do not know how much depends on your union with Frank, nor can I now enlighten you. Good night, love; compose yourself, and get to sleep as soon as possible; that is a summons from Mr. Ashley, I know."

She fondly kissed the being to whom she had just conceded the overthrow of that which she had schemed to attain through so many years; but Mrs. Ashley believed that she had, in that hour, established ever Bessie a power which would hereafter enable her to bend her to her will, and make her the willing wife of Frank Wentworth.

CHAPTER XXX.

SUDDEN DEATH.

ON the following morning Frank arose at an early hour to commence his preparations for the expected journey; but he soon sat down with a sober face to think that this was his wedding-day, and he ought to be wrapped in blissful thoughts of his fair fiancée; but in spite of all his efforts, they were commonplace and dull enough. He muttered:

"I am a stupid fellow, and not worthy of such a bright little will-o'-the-wisp as Bessie, or I would feel more elated at the prospect of claiming her for my own before another day is gone. I wonder if she is right, and that we shall both yet repent marrying in such haste?"

"But what can we do? If either one refuses the other, it seems that the governor will cut off that one with a mere pittance."

"I believe that I like Bessie well enough to take her without a penny for her dower; well, since I feel sure on that point, I would be a fool to give up my share of this large property sooner than accept such a nice little girl for a wife."

"Heigho! I wonder what she will think of the tour on the Continent? I will take her everywhere she asks to go, and try and make her as happy as a bride ought to be. I am sure I can do nothing more than that."

With a feeling of dissatisfaction that made him angry with himself, Frank proceeded with his labours till the bell summoned him to breakfast.

He found no one but Mrs. Ashley in the breakfast-room; she nodded good morning, and said:

"The squire was indisposed in the early part of the night; but I left him in a calm sleep a little while ago. Bessie excused herself from appearing, and I just now sent her breakfast up to her. Everything that we shall need is before us, and I sent the servants away that I may have some private conversation with you before I am again summoned to your grandfather's room."

Frank took his seat opposite her, and said:

"You wish to know what Squire Ashley said to me last night. Is it not so, ma'am?"

She poured out his coffee, smiled brightly upon him, and after he had helped himself to the good things before him, she replied:

"I knew what he would say to you before, and

went in to him, Frank, for the squire has no concealments from me. You understand his wishes fully, so we will not discuss them. What I wish to speak about is this sudden marriage. Bessie seems very much opposed to it, and to tell you the truth, I am very much unwilling that she shall go to Vienna just now. I do not wish her to meet Leon Ashley; it would make me miserable if he should put forward any claim upon her."

Frank listened to her last words in extreme surprise, and he said:

"But how could Mr. Ashley do that, if Bessie becomes my wife? My claim would then be paramount to his, and I should be sure to bring her back to you after the lapse of a few months. After what passed last evening, I thought Bessie pledged to comply with our grandfather's wishes, and, excuse me, Minny, if I say that I thought you even more anxious to effect the match than the governor is."

"So I am—it is the most ardent wish of my soul to see you and Bessie united; but I find her so much against this precipitate marriage, that I hardly know how to press it on her. She likes you, Frank; she appreciates all your true and excellent qualities, but she does not wish to marry you at once, though she almost pledged herself to accept you a year or so hence."

The young man's lip curled slightly, but he made no reply, and Mrs. Ashley went on:

"If I thought you would both remain true to your troth-plight, I would use my influence with the squire to induce him to defer your union at least till after your return from the Continent."

Mrs. Ashley regarded him searchingly as she thus spoke, and after a brief pause Frank honestly said:

"That will be the best for both of us, perhaps. I have no objection to Bessie, but somehow it seems to me that in myself there is something lacking. She may have more heart wisdom than I have, and if she insists on putting off the wedding, I shall not be offended. For a year or two things can go on as they always have, and we can cultivate such an affection for each other as will make us happy as husband and wife."

Mrs. Ashley smiled at this prosaic view of the *grande passion*, but she presently said in a most impressive manner:

"One thing must be understood both by yourself and Bessie; and that is, that you are bound by your pledges to each other as sacredly as if the nuptial benediction had already been pronounced over you. You must not suffer your heart to wander from your betrothed, Frank, and I promise you to watch over your interests in your absence."

"There is little fear that I shall prove inconstant, Minny. I love Bessie better than any one in the world, and there is little danger that I shall find one more attractive than she is. I shall esteem myself a lucky fellow, to win so charming a creature for my wife."

"She is as good as she is lovely, Frank, and with her hand you obtain wealth; without it, you will have nothing. I know that you are not mercenary, but it is well for every man to have an eye to his own interests. A word to the wise is sufficient, you know; and now I must hurry through my breakfast, and go up to the squire. I have before me the task of persuading him to let you go upon your journey free and alone. It may be difficult, but I shall accomplish it."

Frank laughed.

"Of course you will, Minny, for grandpa only sees with your eyes, and judges with your judgment. It is lucky for him that the weakness of his old age has such a guide as you are to him."

She looked keenly at Wentworth, to see if he was perfectly in earnest, but seeing no sinister meaning on the candid brow and honest face before her, Mrs. Ashley proceeded to eat her breakfast in quiet content, congratulating herself that she had prevented a meeting between Leon Ashley and her daughter, yet held both Frank and Bessie more completely in her power than before.

She knew that they implicitly trusted her, and upon that trust she based her means to rear should be erected.

As she arose from the table, a servant rushed into the room quite breathless, and after a pause to gain the power of speech, stammered:

"Please, mum, you are wanted in master's room immediately. He's—he's—oh, heaven, I fear to say what he is!"

Mrs. Ashley scarcely heard the last words, for the soiled face of the servant told its own story. She hastened from the room, and fled along the hall to the chamber in which Squire Ashley lay.

The door was open, and Jupiter and the nurse stood beside the bed.

They stepped aside as their mistress entered, and she saw that her worst fears were verified.

The worn face of the old man lay upon the pillows, calm and peaceful as that of a child, but it was fixed and stony as that of a marble image, and Mrs. Ashley knew that it was death on which she looked.

The sleep in which she had left him had evidently lapsed into that peaceful slumber which finally seals the senses of the children of earth, snatching them from the cares of life, and giving to the vision closed upon this world the brightness of a fairer land.

Mrs. Ashley threw herself beside him with a great cry, but she shuddered and recoiled as her bowed face came in contact with the hand which had so often caressed her, for now it was rapidly chilling into the rigidity of death.

Frank had quickly followed her, and he raised her in his arms as he said, in a choked voice:

"This is no place for you, Minny; let me take you away while the last duties are performed for the good man who is gone. He has ended his honoured career at a ripe old age, and you must not be inconsovable."

She quietly submitted to be taken away, though her heart was filled with a tumult of regret for Squire Ashley's death.

She must have felt it at any time, for he had made her life prosperous, and he had spared no efforts to afford her such happiness as their disproportionate union promised; but at this crisis it was a positive calamity.

Leon Ashley, with his dissipated habits, his reckless disregard of others, would now be sure to return to his native land as soon as he heard of his father's death.

He would assume the control of Bessie's fate, and claim in her a deeper interest than she dared set forth.

In deep perturbation, Mrs. Ashley looked herself up alone, to mourn the bereavement she had met, and to determine on the best course of action to protect herself against the encroachments Squire Ashley's unprincipled son would be sure to attempt.

She dreaded a meeting between herself and Bessie, lest the sure instinct of nature should assure both that the tie supposed to exist between them was baseless as poor Bessie's claim on the estate Squire Ashley had left behind him.

Luckily for Mrs. Ashley, her daughter bore no resemblance to herself, but she beheld in her the living image of her young husband as she had known him in his boyhood, and she feared that Leon would not be so easily deceived as her father had been.

The mark upon Bessie's arm was still there, looking dark and natural enough, but that was the sole proof to offer to Mr. Ashley that she was indeed his child.

The final conclusion the restless schemer arrived at was that the only path of safety left for herself was to unite Frank and Bessie before he set out on his journey.

Some delay must now take place before Wentworth could leave, and in the interim she would work on Bessie in such a way as to extort her consent to become his wife at once.

The bride should remain with her in the seclusion of Ashurst till Frank returned, but this was all she could now yield to the entreaties of the shrinking girl.

Many times during that melancholy day, Bessie came to the door of the room in which she had fastened herself, and petitioned for admittance, but Mrs. Ashley refused to see any one till the conflicting emotions of her own mind had sunk into the quiet of decided action.

On the day of the burial, numerous friends gathered in to testify their respect for the memory of the deceased, but the care of everything was left to Wentworth, for Mrs. Ashley gave no orders, nor did she appear till the funeral cortege was ready to leave the house.

Many wondered why the grave was placed so distant from that of his son, but Frank had selected the spot on which it was made, and his honest heart recoiled from laying the cold remains of his grandfather beside the sham tomb on whose tablet a lie was recorded.

The words which consigned dust to dust were reverently spoken, the strangers departed, and the household was left to the gloom which pervaded it till the next day, when the will was to be read.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS.

Nor until her course was fully determined on did Mrs. Ashley receive her daughter. A few hours after her return from the funeral of her husband, she rang, and sent a message to Bessy that she was now ready to receive her.

She immediately obeyed the summons, and they wept in each other's arms, till calmed by exhaustion. Mrs. Ashley then placed her daughter on a seat, and tremulously said:

"Do not attempt to utter the common-places of consolation, my love. They cannot reach my heart, or take from it one pang for the loss of our best friend. I grieve not only that he is gone, but that he should have been snatched away at such a crisis in your fate. Alas! Bessie, my promise to you cannot now be redeemed; all that remains for you, is to fulfil his last wishes, and I am sure they will be sacred to you."

Bessie regarded her with a frightened expression, and pleadingly said:

"Oh, Minny, don't say that, for Frank and I have talked over what you said the other night to me; he repeated to me the conversation he had with you the next morning, and we have decided that things shall remain as they now are, till his return; you will possess all the authority that can be wielded over me now, and I promise to keep my heart free for him till he comes back. Do not ask me to marry him at present, even if my grandfather did wish it, for I am certain that Frank has as little of the right sort of love for me as I have for him. Besides, I think it will be disrespectful to the memory of him that is gone to have a wedding in the house so soon after his death, for Frank told me yesterday that he intends to obey grandpa's last injunctions so soon as he can make his arrangements for leaving this country."

Bessie spoke in a rapid and excited manner, and Mrs. Ashley took several turns across the floor before she made any attempt to reply. She then sat down beside the young girl, looking pale and resolved, though she tenderly said:

"Bessie, you cannot doubt my true affection for you; it has been demonstrated in every act of my life for many years past, and I believe that I care more for your happiness and prosperity than I do for my own."

"I know it—I feel sure of it, Minny," was the impulsive reply. "No mother could be more careful and tender of her child than you have been of me."

Mrs. Ashley winced, but she impressively went on: "Will you believe me, love, when I assure you that not only your prosperity, but your absolute safety, depends on claiming Frank as your protector before he goes on this errand, which has not yet been explained to you. You force me to touch on ground which should be held sacred—to give you a glimpse of the skeleton that inhabits this house."

The lips of the listener parted, and her eyes expanded to their utmost size.

"You speak in riddles, Minny, which I shall be glad to have explained. I had no suspicion that any disgraceful secret has been concealed from me. If it is a family heritage, let me know it at once. If Frank and I are joint heirs to a reproach which we must bear in common, it may draw us more nearly together; but until this moment I believed our honour to be untainted."

Mrs. Ashley shrank from the pained expression on that young face, at the bare suspicion of dishonour, and she trembled, before the possibility that her own crime might at some future day become known to her child.

With some effort she went on:

"Deeply as you are interested in this sad story, it has been kept from you because neither your grandfather nor I could bear to shadow your young life with the knowledge of the truth concerning your father. But you compel me to lay bare the shameful record, and show you on what a precipice you stand, unless you consent to accept the only protector who is able to save you from the evils that menace you."

After a struggle to control her voice, Bessie said:

"It is I, then, who have a taint upon my name, and poor Frank is to shield me from its blighting consequences. Speak, Minny, and enlighten me as to my true position, for your words only plunge me more deeply in the labyrinth in which, it seems, I have so long unconsciously wandered."

There was a dignity and pathos in the tones of the speaker which proved that in this crisis she would not be wanting to herself; and conscience-stricken as Mrs. Ashley felt, she knew that she must plunge herself still more deeply into falsehood and sin, or risk the loss of all she had so long laboured to gain.

She steadied her voice and went on:

"It is with extreme reluctance that I lift the veil from the past, but it has become my sad duty to do so, and I submit to the necessity that rules me. Bessie, the son of Squire Ashley was a murderer; he fled from justice, and took refuge in France, where he yet lives under an assumed name. He is a wretched, reckless profligate, who cares for nothing save his own enjoyment. He has formed other ties—has other children, who may come hither to thrust you aside, if you do not secure your own position by



[DEATH OF SQUIRE ASHLEY.]

obeying the will of your grandfather at once. Leon Ashley will be sure to return here now his father is dead, and unless he finds you and Frank married, he may resume his own name and claim the estate as heir-at-law. Such things have been done before now, and they may be done again."

Mrs. Ashley might have spoken much longer without interruption, for Bessie seemed frozen into immobility by this unexpected revelation. She sat, white and rigid, for many moments after Mrs. Ashley ceased speaking, and her mother was beginning to feel alarmed at her overwhelming emotion, when she uttered a convulsive sob and said:

"My father living! a criminal—bearing the reproach of blood upon him! Capable of circumventing the last wishes of his only parent, of impoverishing his child! Oh, Minny! what a catalogue of evil to place at once before the eyes of his daughter! You were cruel to tell me this, for this man dare not return to his native land—he dare not assume his own name again."

"My dear Bessie, the man I speak of will dare anything by which he can serve his own interests. He has already written for permission to return here, and he asserts that he is so changed that no one could recognize him as Leon Ashley; but now the squire is gone, he will care little for that, and he will risk everything to carry out his own wishes. The crime for which he fled could never have been brought home to him, and he knows it. It was only the sensitive family pride of his father which forced Leon Ashley to the course which he took. Now Mr. Ashley is dead, he will be quite capable of returning; of laying on him the blame of the fraud that was perpetrated, and resuming his own name again. Should he do so, it will be with a view of stripping you and Frank of the inheritance bequeathed to you by your grandfather. Do you fully understand me, child?"

Bessie pressed her hands to her forehead and vaguely said:

"I believe I do; but my brain seems very much confused. I shall be able to think more clearly presently, and to comprehend what will be the best course for me to pursue."

Mrs. Ashley urgently said:

"There is but one safe course, Bessie. Think what your position will be if this unprincipled man comes hither, assumes the position of master in this house, and gives his wife the authority to control you. He will have the power to separate you from me; nay—he must do so, for I shall leave Ashurst before such a ruler as he will prove can enter its walls."

The poor girl, thus sorely pressed, threw herself upon the breast of the wily speaker, with a burst of deep emotion, and sobbed:

"I see—I see that there is no escape for me. Do with me as you please, Minny; if Frank knows this story, and is still willing to accept me as his wife, and protect me from my own father, I will no longer refuse to give him my hand. But we must be married on the morning of his departure, and he must leave me with you."

"Of course, love," replied the triumphant schemer, clasping her daughter fondly to her heart, and tenderly caressing her. "I would never willingly consent to throw you in contact with Mr. Ashley, and if Frank goes to him as your husband, bearing with him a copy of his father's will, he may make no effort to come back here when he finds that nothing is to be gained by it."

Bessie extricated herself from her arms, and pleadingly said:

"There, Minny—please excuse me now; I must leave you and think over all this in solitude. When I am alone I can struggle to regain the calmness and self-control necessary for all that I have to go through."

Mrs. Ashley said:

"You can remain here, love, for I must seek Frank and confer with him."

She placed Bessie on the sofa, lowered the curtain, and softly left the room for the purpose of informing Westworth of the consent she had extorted from Bessie in so false a manner, that the ceremony of marriage should be performed before he left Ashurst. She found him in the library, selecting such books as he wished to take with him on his voyage, and he listened to what she had to say with some surprise, for he and Bessie had mutually agreed that they would defer their union till after his return from the Continent.

Mrs. Ashley frankly placed before him her most urgent reason for wishing it to take place before Leon Ashley became aware of his father's death, and she contrived to inspire the young man with so great a dread of his unknown kinsman, that he believed the only safe course for Bessie would be to take shelter from her father's authority under the protection of a husband.

He gravely said:

"I regret that you were compelled to throw this shadow on Bessie's life, but, as you say, it was the only course left open to you. Since she consents, we will fulfil the conditions of the will, and I doubt not that we shall ultimately find the blessing promised

to obedient children. Reassure my poor cousin, and tell her that everything shall be arranged as she wishes. She shall remain here with you, and when I come back to claim her, and assume my rights as master here, my first act will be to retain you as our beloved companion and guide. Neither Bessie nor I could be happy if you were turned out of the home over which you have so long presided."

Mrs. Ashley took his hand in both of her own, and tenderly said:

"Dear Frank, I feel assured that so thoughtful and noble a man as you are must make the happiness of any woman he may love. Bessie is as dear to me as if she were my own child, but I give her to you with the fond assurance that you are fully worthy of her."

"I will try and prove that your confidence is not misplaced, Minny. But now I must leave you, for I have a hundred things to attend to before I leave Ashurst."

"And when do you propose to go on the Continent?"

"To-morrow night, by the ten o'clock train. So Bessie will not have much time for further wavering. If so much for us both were not at stake, I hardly think I would accept her decision; but I hope it will turn out for the best. The lawyer who made grandpa's will promised to come here at four this afternoon to read it. In the morning I will procure the license, and have the minister here to give me my bonny bride. How does that suit you?"

"You are a man of action, Frank," replied Mrs. Ashley with a faint smile, as she turned away to leave the room. "Only deal as promptly with your uncle, and we may not have the calamity of having him come hither, to establish himself in our very midst."

"He will hardly think of that," said Frank, in some dismay. "He may be arrested, you know, for what he did so long ago."

"There is no knowing what such a man as Leon Ashley may not do," was the reply, as Mrs. Ashley disappeared.

Frank sat down and wrote a brief note to Bessie, thanking her for the concession she had made, and assured her that he would never have taken advantage of her consent to become his under such painful circumstances, but for the conviction he felt that she would need his protection.

Having sent this up to her by Minny, he set himself resolutely to work to prepare for his speedy departure.

(To be continued.)



[LADY VALERIA'S INTERVIEW WITH THE DUKE OF YORK.]

THE FORESTER.

CHAPTER VIII.

LADY VALERIA AND THE EARL OF BEAUFORT.

Life has passed
With me but roughly since I saw thee last.

Couper.

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more!

R. Lovelace.

LADY VALERIA sat by the turret-window, which commanded a fine view of the adjacent country, with a piece of embroidery, a gorgeous tangle of floss silk, and her needle occupying much of her attention, but with her eyes often straying from her work to her father, or the wintry landscape without.

Thanks to her care and heaven's blessing, the earl was slowly growing convalescent, and could sit two or three hours each day in his great arm-chair. She had not yet told him of the seeming forester's visit, his declaration of love, or his disclosure with regard to his personal history, lest the shock which it would produce should prove fatal; and it was of this she was thinking as her gaze wandered into the park where she had wandered with the pilgrim.

Suddenly she perceived a horseman dash round an angle of the distant high-road, and enter the great gates. Who could it be? Was it Lionel Richmond, or anybody who might bring tidings of him?

Intently she watched till her father, roused from his brief nap by the sound of hoof-beats on the drawbridge, looked up, and asked:

"What is that, my daughter—did not some person cross the drawbridge, or did I dream it?"

"Nay, there is a horseman below."

"And who is he?"

"I cannot tell; he is a stranger."

"No cavalier from the court then, but whoever it may be, you must go down and see what is wanted; the steward is gone, and the servants do not understand my affairs. Arrange my pillows, and I may fall asleep whilst you are absent."

The girl obeyed, and descending to the hall, met a man clad in the simple garb of a peasant, but with a face that bespoke honesty and intelligence—it was James Thurlow. The visitant bowed courteously, and said:

"I know I have the honour of meeting Lady Valeria Lyndhurst; can I see you alone?" Mute with apprehension, the girl conducted him into the keeping-room, where the pilgrim had told his love, and closing the door, turned the key in the lock. "My lady," resumed Thurlow, "I am aware of your love

for, and secret betrothal to Lionel Richmond, for humble as I may seem, he has thought me worthy to be entrusted with his confidence, and watch over and warn you if needful! I have sad tidings for you to-day."

"Go on, do not keep me in suspense," interposed the girl, with wild earnestness.

"Well, Lady Valeria, Lionel Richmond has been betrayed; it has been told his majesty that he had obtained his position as forester in Windsor woods to act as spy on the Lancastrian government, and he whom you first knew as Robert Markman has been arrested, and cast into custody to await his trial for treason."

Harold, the young man's page, had declared that Valeria Lyndhurst's love could not be half so deep as Bonibell's, but now she sank down with a long, wailing cry, and forgot everything in blank unconsciousness.

For a moment the peasant was perplexed, and inclined to open the door and call the servants, but a second thought was wiser.

A goblet of water stood on a silver tray, which had just been brought from the earl's room, and seizing it he sprinkled a few drops in her face, and forced a little through her white lips, and then chafed her hands till she was again conscious.

"What, what were you saying?" she faltered.

"Oh, lady, it is hard for me to repeat it—to come to you with evil tidings, but my duty to you and to him drove me to you. Lionel Richmond is in the Tower, and must soon meet his trial as a spy."

The poor girl still trembled, and her face looked even more statue-like than Bonibell Seymour's had when she sat listening to the page's sad story in the Duchess of York's bower-room, and it was with extreme difficulty she could gasp:

"What can be done to save him? for he must not die."

"That is a question I would fain discuss with you, Lady Valeria; you have influence at court, you and your father—and I would counsel you to tell him all, and cast yourself on his mercy. And now I will leave you, but before we part, a word more—if you are in need of assistance, do not fear to trust James Thurlow."

"And where do you live?"

"I am a woodman on the estate of Sir Rufus Haliburton, and there you will find me in a plain, brown hut, which will be pointed out to you by the gate-keeper, who is in secret friendly to me, and the cause of the White Rose. God pity you, lady, and give you strength in your great trial!"

Mechanically Lady Valeria unlocked the door, and saw him walk into the hall; mechanically ascending the staircase, she returned to the turret-chamber.

Her father had fallen asleep, and she had therefore time to collect her thoughts for the ordeal before her; but at length he stirred uneasily in his chair, and woke from his fitful slumber.

"How pale you are!" he exclaimed, fixing a keen gaze upon her face.

Valeria sprang to him, and sinking at his feet, abandoned herself to a passion of tears, while her sobs echoed dimly through the room. Finally she gained strength and courage to say:

"Father I have a confession to make which will startle you, and pain you, but I must speak nevertheless."

And she proceeded to reveal what she had hitherto kept a secret from him, the fact that the seeming pilgrim who had asked alms at the castle door, had rescued her from drowning in the surf, and been so much in love with her as to assume the garb of forester at Windsor in the hope of occasionally meeting her.

She told how he had hovered around the royal castle to watch her movements, and that when he had restored her to her father after her exposure to the perils of the forest, the only boon he had craved in return was one he dared not ask at the hands of the proud earl—his daughter's heart.

The old man started, and exclaimed:

"Valeria, Valeria, do you love him?"

"Yes, with my whole soul."

"And who is he?"

"Of course his real name was not Robert Markman, but Lionel Richmond; and—and, my father, he is an adopted son of the Duke of York!"

"And you have fallen in love with a zealous Yorkist—you, the daughter of a rank Lancastrian!"

"Yes; but I have not finished my story; his secret has been betrayed to the king, and he has been arrested and thrown into the Tower. My dear father, he has twice saved me from death, and on the day he restored me to your love and care, you declared you should ever afterwards hold him in grateful remembrance, and yearned to reward him, offering the gold he did not need, and the distinction he scorned to receive. Now, now the hour has come, and you can serve him if you will!"

"How, child; how?"

"Would you have his blood on your hands when you can mayhap save him by your timely interposition?"

The old earl reflected a few moments ere he replied:

"I am old and feeble, but Lancastrian though I am, if I were in London I would speak in his favour."

"Father, let me go; love will give me strength and courage!"

"Child, you cannot travel alone a distance of ten leagues amid the cold of winter, and the perils which will beset you. Hark ye! I will despatch a messenger to his majesty, begging him for my sake to be merciful to a man to whom I owe my daughter's life."

"If the courier is sent I will accompany him; I shall give myself no peace, no rest, till I see the king and queen."

Hours dragged wearily by, during which Valeria's project was fully discussed, and her father's consent reluctantly gained; and leaving Barbara and the house-keeper to care for her father, with his husky "God speed you!" ringing in her ears, and his message concealed among the folds of her robe, she set out upon her perilous journey.

As her father had once remarked, she had been delicately reared, and beside, her strength had been severely taxed during the early illness, but every energy of her being was now devoted to the performance of the task before her.

She had a solemn mission to accomplish, a purpose to fulfil, and with something of the spirit of the Spartan woman, she journeyed towards London.

Over hill and dale, through dense woods, and dim, rocky dingles, with the wind sweeping fiercely by, and the snow falling around her and beneath her horse's feet, she kept on, brave and fearless.

What was all this to her, when she thought of the young life which might, but for her interposition, be doomed to drag out weary years in the dungeons of the Tower, or blotted for ever from the earth?

Valeria and her single attendant were a league perhaps from Windsor, when they met one of the begging friars, who were wont to stroll from door to door, and beg a scanty pittance.

The friar stopped and exclaimed:

"Prithce, do not pass without giving, alms to the needy."

Valeria placed a coin in the open palm, and inquired:

"Whence came you, good father?"

"From London, lady."

"And what news bring you from yonder city?"

"There is little news, daughter, save that the king on Monday signed the death warrant of Lionel Richmond, who, disguised as a forester, played a bold game as a Yorkist spy."

Every nerve of the girl's frame thrilled as she listened, but she found voice to articulate:

"Has he had his trial?"

"Yes, but his friends say it was not conducted fairly. More than one petition has been sent his majesty, but he is firm—his fate is sealed!"

A sharp cry broke from Valeria, and without waiting to hear another word, she urged her palfrey forward.

At length she reached Windsor Park, and struck into the very avenue along which she rode with the gallant forester on the day of her restoration to her father.

Her heart was full of tender memories, as her thoughts roved back to the past, and for a time she lost sight of the bitter task which had brought her to Windsor.

They had gained the court-yard, which had been so gay with preparations for that memorable chase, described in our opening chapter, ere she awoke from her reverie, and then her mission rose sternly before her.

Looking up at the massive walls, and remembering what the friar had told her relative to the king's firmness concerning Richmond, her courage failed, but only for a moment; the next she had leaped from her palfrey, and darted up the stairs.

The old Lord Chamberlain was not in attendance, but as soon as she gave the name of Lady Valeria Lyndhurst, she was allowed to pass.

Through corridor after corridor, and room after room familiar to her during her residence with Margaret of Anjou, she hurried till she stopped amid a group of pages, gathered near the threshold of the audience-chamber, where Henry had once paid such honours to the hero of Windsor Forest.

"I would fain see his majesty," said the girl, with the air of a person who does not mean to be denied.

"Impossible," cried a pert youth, a significant smile playing about his saucy lips, "he is ill."

"Tush, tush, Arthur," exclaimed another, "you know our orders were explicit not to bar the door against a certain visitor. Pray what may your name be?" he added, in a respectful tone, and with an earnest gaze.

"Valeria Lyndhurst," was the low reply.

"And you have served as maid of honour to Margaret of Anjou?"

"Yes; but you were not then in the royal household?"

"Nay, my lady; but I have heard too much of you to be deceived. Come in!"

As he spoke he flung the door wide open, and ushered the guest into the grand, old chamber.

The chair of state had an occupant, but it was not Henry VI., and as he rose to his full height and moved toward her, she found herself face to face with a man of noble presence, tall, erect, stately, and "every inch a king."

"What is this?" faltered the lady; "what means the change I find at Windsor Castle? Where can I have a brief audience with the king?"

"First let me ask, and do not deem me presumptuous, for indeed I have the right, what purpose has brought you hither?"

"I have come to plead for the life of Lionel Richmond, who lies under sentence of death in the Tower."

"Lady, I have joyful tidings for you, if Lionel is dear to you; the signing of his death-warrant was Henry's last act of authority; the trials which have gathered about a usurped throne have turned his brain, and he is no longer able to manage the affairs of state."

Lady Valeria looked perplexed, and he went on: "The queen succeeded in keeping it from the people until after the death of the Primate of England, and then the twelve peers, despatched to confer with Henry, accompanied the truth. As for me, I shall be obliged to introduce myself, as I desire my first interview with Lady Valeria Lyndhurst to be entirely private."

I am Richard, Duke of York, Lord Protector of England, and I assure you it was a pleasant task to release Lionel, my adopted son."

The girl's cheek crimsoned, and her brown eyes kindled with sudden joy.

"He is safe then," she murmured; "how much sunshine and shadow, happiness and misery may be crowded into a single day!"

"Ay, lady, and you might as well have added political revolutions; for during the last week the aspect of affairs has entirely changed—the White Rose of England is in power, and God grant he may use it not for personal revenge, but for the good of the realm!"

At that moment a footfall was heard, and a voice which vibrated musically on the girl's ear, said:

"Valeria, Valeria!"

The lady glanced round, and perceiving the familiar form and face of the speaker, for whom she had suffered and sacrificed so much, murmured:

"Lionel!" and sank into his arms.

The protector smiled, and Lionel said gaily.

Your interview with Lady Valeria was not as private as you may have thought, my dear father; I must confess I have been eavesdropping."

"A most discourteous act, had, but at an hour fraught with such pleasant associations, I will not reprimand you, or longer intrude upon the joy of your meeting."

As he spoke he moved away, and the young man folded Valeria to his heart in that strong emotion which is too deep for words. At length, however, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Lionel, my happiness appears vague and dream-like; it seems as if I should wake to the reality that you are dragging out a miserable existence in the Tower, with a death-warrant hanging over you! How much you must have suffered!"

"Ay, Valeria; my treatment was barbarous, for as a spy I was loaded with irons, and kept in a solitary cell; but I am amply compensated for all I have endured in the sweet consciousness of your devotion, which was communicated to me by the faithful James Thurlow. He told my father, too, that you were on your way to Windsor, and we have been preparing a pleasant surprise for you. Harold, my own page, who has shared my fortunes through good and evil, was stationed at the door, with a group of companions, with orders to admit Lady Valeria Lyndhurst whenever she should arrive, but not to betray our secret. To-morrow my mother is expected at the castle, and she will give you the praise and the welcome you deserve."

The crimson came and went on the girl's face, and drawing her to a seat on a pile of cushions, heaped beneath the window, Lionel Richmond talked long and earnestly, and when they appeared at dinner in the banqueting-hall, the beautiful Valeria wore a white rose which her lover had ventured to wreath among her rich tresses.

That night they walked for a few moments on the battlements, and gazing on the leafless trees and desolate fields, the girl murmured:

"Lionel, it is winter without, but summer in my heart!"

Ah! joy had lent a new charm to everything around her, and life seemed henceforth to be a pleasant path, winding on through more than the fabulous wonders of fairy-land; but she did not see the reverses which in one short year were to bring back anxiety and care, and require all the strength and fortitude of a true woman.

CHAPTER IX.

BATTLE OF ST. ALBAN'S.

Cry havoc! and let slip the dogs of war.

Julius Caesar.

He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a-dippee when the day is named.

King Henry V.

The brief sway of the Duke of York was marked by caution and clemency, and while exercising the duties of his office which had been proffered by Parliament, the protector was careful to have it understood throughout his dominions that he "only followed their noble command." It is true that one of his first acts was to entrust the great seal to the Earl of Salisbury, but on the whole his moderation was conspicuous, and the claims of Prince Edward, the son of Henry VI. and Margaret of Anjou, having been fully recognised, he was created Prince of Wales, and Earl of Chester, and a splendid provision made for his maintenance. The necessity of the king, however, threw everything into disorder; the news spread from Thames to Tweed, and from Kent to Northumberland, and the politicians of the Red Rose congratulated themselves on their good fortune.

The Duke of York now resigned his protectorship, not because he believed Henry the less a usurper, but from a thirst for some of honour, and Margaret of Anjou regained her ascendancy in England. Such was the state of affairs, that if she had displayed in a slight degree the tolerance manifested by Richard of York, she might have retained the good opinion of the people; but she seemed to grow more and more revengeful as time moved on.

While the king had lain ill, the Earl of Somerset had been arrested and sent to the Tower, a measure which met the warm approval of every subject, as he had incurred the public odium by an utter abuse of his power.

He was now released without being brought to trial for his offences against the country, and appointed Captain-General of Calais. After this outrage, the Yorkists became convinced that the sword alone could settle the great controversy, and in the succeeding spring, the duke returned to Ludlow, summoned his retainers, and prepared for the war, which was inevitable. He was soon joined by the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, John Mowbray, and other cavaliers worthy to be styled White Rose Chiefs. York then armed and equipped the march-men of Wales, and commenced his advance toward the capital.

Somerset immediately assembled a Lancastrian force, and headed by the king in person, the army marched from London to meet the Yorkists.

Among the forces marshalled by the Red Rose, were Lord Percy and Jasper De Vere. Percy's repentance had been only transient, and he and De Vere hated their rival with terrible intensity, and when they at length learned what a stratagem he had employed to gain admittance to Windsor Forest, betrayed the secret to the king.

During the away of the Protector they had retired to their ancestral seats, and when Henry was reinstated and the sky grew black with omens of war, they were the first to offer their services to Somerset.

And Valeria Lyndhurst—what of her? The Earl of Beaufort was still living, and though he had not yet consented to an alliance with the House of York, he had too much fatherly kindness to wound her by openly expressing his opinion.

The chill winds of March, and the fitful sunshine and shadow of April had given place to May, and England was in all her glory.

The grass was the fresh green of spring-time; the cuckoo-mint, the violet, and the English thistle spangled the fields and banks; the hedges were in full bloom, the woods again tossed their leafy branches as if they would fain touch the sky; the young girls gathered water-cresses in their brown braids, and sun-browned lads went—

To call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the meadow down the lane.

It was at the pleasant hour of the glimmering that Valeria might have been seen wandering across the drawbridge of Beaufort Castle, and into the park beyond.

Her young heart was heavy, for though she had not met her lover for several weeks, she knew a national tempest was gathering, and feared lest the clouds might at any moment break in all their fury.

At parting Richard of York had whispered:

"Be brave, and calm, and heroic, as befits the future wife of a White Rose Chief!"

But she had found it hard to obey him, and now a thousand vague, forebodings haunted her. Suddenly a voice murmured:

"Valeria, I am here!"

And she was locked in a convulsive embrace.

"Welcome, welcome Lionel!" she replied; "my

heart is full of fears, but mayhap your presence will drive them away."

"I would it might, dearest, but I have nothing pleasant to communicate."

"What mean you?—do not keep me in suspense."

"List, and I will tell you, but I must breathe it in a whisper, lest I should be overheard by some Lancastrian. My father's army lies not a league distant; the royal forces are on the march, and a pitched battle is inevitable."

"And where—where?"

"At St. Alban's, or thereabouts."

"Oh, Lionel, Lionel, this may be our last meeting!"

The young man drew her close to him, and his face grew grave and solemn as he continued:

"Ay, Valeria; it would be hard to die now, but I know not how the battle will turn. If we are victorious, the White Rose banner will float on yonder hill-side in triumph; if we are defeated, it will be trailed in the dust. Go up into your great Norman tower and watch the fight, and since your views have been revolutionized, I trust you will pray for our success."

"Yes, Lionel; and let this thought cheer you in the hour of peril."

The next moment he was gone, and the girl moved back into the castle with an unsteady step, and during the whole night paced her room with feverish unrest.

The morning subsequent, Henry VI. and his army had almost reached St. Alban's, when they perceived the hills before them covered with men-at-arms, marching rapidly towards the historic old town. The Lancastrian leaders now halted and displayed the royal standard, while Lord Clifford was ordered to guard the barriers with his troops, and the Duke of Buckingham sent to confer with the warriors of the White Rose, who had encamped at Hatfield.

We are told that Richard Plantagenet, though a warrior of great courage, had no relish for bloodshed, and did not forget that those to whom he now stood opposed were Englishmen like himself.

When, therefore, Buckingham went, in Henry's name, to ask him to lay down his arms, he declared he would not do it unless Somerset was surrendered to justice.

The answer was reported to the king, and with more spirit than he had ever before been known to manifest, "he sworn by St. Edward that he would as soon deliver up his crown as surrender Somerset, or the meanest soldier in the camp."

The idea of reconciliation, therefore, became hopeless, and the partisans of the House of York, who had been inactive several hours, prepared for an immediate battle.

The duke eloquently addressed his adherents, and with their pennons flapping in the breeze, and with clarions sounding the call to arms, they commenced the contest.

(To be continued.)

MR. JOHN MORANT, of Brookenhurst, in the New Forest, in order to encourage poor cottagers to keep bees, has instituted an annual honey show. The first show was held a few days ago, when prizes were distributed to those poor people who had been most successful with their bees.

THE first invention of the process of procuring alum by artificial means is not known, but it appears to have originated in the East soon after the twelfth century. In the fifteenth century there were alum works at Constantinople. The first alum works in England were established at Whitby, by Sir Thomas Chaloner, who was excommunicated by Pope Pius II. for so doing. His Holiness having assumed the right of exclusively supplying Europe.

THE telegraph seems to be rapidly advancing backwards. Not only was the news of Lord Palmerston's death unknown at the London newspaper offices until from four to five hours after the event had happened, but, according to the *Débat*, a telegram announcing the intelligence, which was despatched from London at 8-52, did not arrive in Paris until ten o'clock. In other words, the telegraph took six hours to accomplish a distance which the mails accomplished in ten hours. It is really high time that Government investigated into the very worst managed of all the public services.

Few people are aware of the vast number of passengers carried by the 664 omnibuses belonging to the Paris General Company. They amount to 93,270,719 annually. The 44 omnibuses which run from the church of the Madeleine to the Bastille take 3,938,543 passengers. The 33 omnibuses which run from the Bastille to the Odéon convey 4,936,012. The omnibus of the Ternes takes 4,030,288; that from Montmartre to Montparnasse, 4,027,308. Next in importance comes the omnibus from the Barrière Charenton to St. Philippe de Roule, which

takes 3,727,664. The two which take the fewest passengers are that from the Barrière de Charenton to the Barrière de Fontainebleau, 1,640,706, and that from the Petite Vilette to the Cours la Reine, 1,551,658.

DON ENRIQUE'S WOOING.

CHAPTER I.

"COME hither, Manuella!"

The beautiful Castilian girl, who had reposed the quiet hours of the siesta among the luxurious cushions of a deep window embrasure, started up and knelt at the feet of the speaker—a dignified woman, of serene countenance, whereon was blended goodness and majesty of expression, and of royal presence—a woman whose name was written then in the hearts of her subjects, as since, upon the pages of history, Isabella of Castile and Arragon.

It was an exquisite picture framed in the dark carved walls of that fine old castle chamber, and lighted by the strong western glow falling through the tall, mullioned windows—the queen, in the fulness of her mature and dignified beauty, with her head resting against the back of her carved chair, and her rich *negligée* robes sweeping the tessellated floor, and the young and startlingly lovely Spanish maiden, clad in loose costume of finest white muslin, girdled about her slender waist with a rich Indian scarf of splendid crimson dye, and the purple luxuriance of her hair coiled in heavy braids about her small, well-poised head.

The queen smiled upon the maiden as she knelt gracefully before her.

"What would'st thou, gracious lady?" asked Manuella de Cabrera, lifting her dreamy oval eyes to the gaze bent upon her. "I fear thou art finding our old Castle of Segovia a poor exchange for thy court and palace. The hours pass dully here."

"Nay, even sovereigns love rest for a time, little one!" responded Isabella, playfully. "The day already slopes to sunset; and while thou hast been sleeping or dreaming, the king, thy sire, and our train of gentlemen are doubtless returning to the castle. It was crossing my brain just now what a right royal supporter of our crown hath ever proved Andrea de Cabrera, and what a lovely flower his daughter hath grown up among these secluded fastnesses."

"Thou flatterest me, Lady Isabella!" said the girl, modestly drooping her gaze.

The queen smiled, and softly caressed the silky length of a braid that had escaped its jewelled fillet, and strayed down the polished neck and shoulder.

"Did thy mirror never tell thee this story hitherto, sweet child?" Isabella asked. "The dark blue of the Eresma winding below the castle walls, the rich heart of the cleft pomegranate, pointing to the fruit that filled a silver basket on a table of inlaid mosaic, 'the purple tint of the ripe grape of thy native vales, cannot rival the hue of thine eyes, thy cheek, and thy hair. Manuella, child, when thy queen returns to Barcelona to hold winter court, thou wilt be summoned hither, to show our haughtiest ladies of Castile and Arragon what a peerless daughter hath our faithful Alcade. It is a duty owed your sire, Manuella. Fifteen years have fled since from the gates of Segovia Isabella of Arragon rode forth in state a queen—since in yonder chapel Spain's crown first rested on my brow; and now the rites of hospitality can be returned to the child of our staunchest adherent. Thou wilt like a life at our court, Manuella, for there will be plenty of our noblest cavaliers to pay homage to the fairest lady about the person of thy queen. But look ye, child, yonder come the hunters, early from the forest; and foremost, at the right of King Ferdinand's saddle-bow, rides our favourite knight, Don Enrique Munoz! A noble cavalier, in good sooth, and worthy of the smiles of beauty—for he hath performed such deeds of valour in these Moorish wars now raging, that our royal consort hath advanced him highest in favour of our court. Ha, see! he looketh toward our window, Manuella!"

It was a noble cavalcade that swept down the hills, across the open country, over the drawbridge, and under the porticulis into the castle court-yard—King Ferdinand, the Alcade de Cabrera, knights and squires of every degree; and the gay trappings of their steeds glittered in the sunset light.

The Cavalier de Munoz rode a splendid Arabian horse caparisoned with richest housings; and when the knight's gaze caught a vision of the queen and the beautiful Manuella from the arched window, his dark face kindled with new life, and he lifted his plumed riding-cap and bowed till his own jetty locks almost met his charger's tossing mane.

"A noble-looking knight, is he not, Manuella?" asked the queen, smiling, for she had not the glance of admiration in Don Enrique's eyes.

"Ay, lady," responded the girl, "the Cavalier de Munoz is gallant and brave; his fame is just. Your majesty hath a faithful follower."

"Don Enrique seldom bestows thought or attention on the ladies of our court," said the queen. "Glory hath hitherto been his sole mistress. And yet, the woman who wins his love hath a royal dowry."

The maiden did not reply, for the grim, stern face of the haughty De Munoz had no charms for her; but her gaze wandered covertly to a young and handsome knight who rode in the rear of the *cortège*, and whose chivalrous grace of bearing had impressed her with the opinion that, of all the cavaliers who had come hither in the royal train, he—the young Ponce de Ripperda—was courtliest and most winning. Even as she gazed, the eyes of Ripperda sought the turret window; and noting her fair face framed in the small diamond casement, he bowed in such true cavalier style that his snow white plume swept his handsome face.

Manuella's gaze lingered upon the train till it swept out of vision's range into the stone paved court-yard below; and the slender, yet sinewy form of the young Castilian knight, clad in an elegant hunting dress and doublet, his purely cut features, his delicately curling beard, and the eloquent, expressive glance of his dark eyes were impressed upon her memory.

"Prithee, child, hast fallen into a dream concerning the chance for the knight Don Enrique's favour?" laughingly asked the queen, tapping the girl's shoulder with her royal finger whereon glittered the signet ring of the kingdom. "Thou forgettest, in dreaming of thy lovers, that the day is spending fast, and our robing is not yet in suitable condition to meet King Ferdinand and our host, thy worthy sire, at the dinner board in the great banquetting hall."

With a slight blush, Manuella rose from her kneeling position in the cushioned stone window embrasure, and touched a tiny golden bell upon the arabesque toilet table.

Its musical chime had scarcely stirred the perfumed air ere a beautiful Moorish girl glided in from an adjoining ante-chamber; and with her appearance, Manuella left the queen's chamber for her own.

"Zulu, haste thee in our tiring, for the king hath returned from the hunt and we are not in readiness to receive him," said Isabella.

With dexterous fingers the beautiful serving-girl obeyed—plaiting the heavy hair of her royal mistress, and fastening her rich robes.

Presently, fresh from his own apartment, where he had exchanged his hunting suit for his kingly robes, Ferdinand sought his wife's rooms; and an hour afterward, they passed along the wide gallery, down the grand staircase, toward the hall below.

From a niche in the corner of the gallery, to which she took herself after their departure, Zulu, the beautiful Moorish girl, watched the various guests traversing its length; but when Manuella glided past, radiant in youth and beauty, and the tall Don Enrique, in elegant court attire, followed his lovely hostess and courteously escorted her down the staircase, a dark frown settled on the Moorish girl's brow, and a gleam of hate flashed into her liquid eyes.

CHAPTER II.

A MONTH had passed; and again the sunset glow was flooding the turrets of the grand old Castle of Segovia, gilding towers, bastions, and balconies with its splendour, flinging long rays down into the narrow ravine where flowed the winding Eresma, illumining the thick groves of limes and cedars, purpling the smiling vineyards and tipping with a roseate hue the distant chain of Pyrenees rising steeply against the blue horizon.

This long pleasant summer month had Queen Isabella, her royal consort, and suite lingered in the cool Segovian valley, passing their days in the delightful quiet of the magnificent forest or among the surrounding scenery; and while the noble hidalgo, Andrea de Cabrera, sought to confer the various rites of hospitality upon his royal guests, no less did his beautiful daughter, by her winning grace and loveliness, attract every heart to her shrine.

The proud, stern Cavalier de Munoz, on whom woman's smiles had hitherto been lavished vainly at the splendid court of his queen, now daily bent in devotion to the sweet flower of this secluded mountain forest; but there was another homage far dearer to Manuella's heart—the yet unspoken worship of young Ponce de Ripperda—unspoken, save in the eloquent language of his dark eyes.

It was twilight, and all that long summer day had a *fête* been held in the cool groves of the winding Eresma without the castle.

Upon the river's green banks—beneath whispering limes, stately pomegranates, dark cedars, and fragrant citrons—along wild paths green with richest mosses, and across rustic bridges wreathed with thick grape-

vines—everywhere, from nook and fastness, rung out the sweet peal of laughter, or pressed the slippered foot of the beautiful ladies of Isabella's train. Noble cavaliers in velvet hose and doublet, embroidered collar and cuffs of finest point, and well-curled locks, moved beside dark-eyed, olive-checked Andalusian maids, whose satin trains swept the mossy sward, and whose jewels vied with the sunlight flashing through the rifts of greenery overhead.

With stately step and benignant smile upon her noble features, Isabella mingled with the throng, forgetting the queen in the woman, and participating with keenest enjoyment in the festival.

Her robe of silky emerald velvet sparkled with rubies—a single tiara of gold and rubies banded her expansive brow—and a gemmed cross hung pendant from a slender chain of Moorish workmanship upon her heart.

She leaned upon the arm of the stately Cavalier de Munoz, most favoured knight of her court.

"Frithee, Don Enrique, let us tarry awhile upon this inviting seat!" exclaimed Isabella, as they entered a cool shaded pavilion, where a cloth of velvet and gold had been spread over a bank of moss to tempt the royal visitor. "Our worthy host is most thoughtful for our comfort and ease. A right princely entertainment hath he given us here at Segovia; and we shall take back our most grateful remembrances to our court. Hast thou as welcome memory to carry also thither, De Munoz?" she queried, with an arched smile, turning suddenly to her companion. "Nay, speak out boldly, Don Enrique! Thy queen had been lacking in the penetration of her sex had she not already perceived it."

A sudden wave of colour passed over the usually haughty face of the knight as he met the half-smiling, half-serious gaze of Isabella.

"Your gracious lady hath indeed shown wisdom in divining what lieth here," and he laid his hand upon his heart. "There be wounds, my queen, more incurable than from Moorish scimitar or javelin; and the warrior confesseth to having got such in the old Castle of Segovia."

The soft summer wind sighed through the citron bands over the velvet carpeted pavilion as the queen laughingly replied:

"Bravely spoken, and nobly surrendered, Don Enrique! You love the beautiful Lady Manuella?"

"As the Christian worships this symbol of his faith!" replied the noble, pointing to the sparkling cross upon Isabella's velvet bodice.

"And this love suits me well, Don Enrique. Be sure that Isabella's consent is thine; and that our worthy Governor de Cabrera will gladly welcome to his house alliance so noble as thine own. Now speed thee in thy wooing with the fair Manuella, into whose ear thy praise hath already been spoken. Come, let us stray hence—and mayhap thou canst meet the coveted opportunity right speedily!" and Isabella rose. "But prithee, hear'st thou not a step! None have been listeners to our converse, Don Enrique?" and the queen glanced round among the shadows.

"Nay, it was the wind among the citron boughs," replied the knight, gallantly giving Isabella precedence from the pavilion. "Whom should I fear of all the cavaliers at Segovia, unless, indeed, the Lady Manuella puts youth, and curled, scented locks, and cavalier graces in the scale against me?" but the haughty curl of the knight's lips belied his words.

"Tush, Don Enrique! Trust a woman to read the heart of a woman. Will not valorous deeds and knightly prowess outweigh the mere coxcombries of the court lover? And I do bethink me of none here who woo the Lady Manuella save thyself. Pass on, Don Enrique!"

As the twain left the pavilion, Zulu, the dark-eyed Moorish girl emerged from the thick shadows of the citron and paused one moment ere she dashed into the heart of the forest.

Her slender hands were clasped convulsively; her dark olive cheeks were wet with a rain of despairing tears flowing from her lambent, soulful eyes.

For an instant the tears fell, then the heat of a fierce rage dried them suddenly; and locking her interwreathed fingers closer, she said, in a low, concentrated, shivering tone:

"Let the Christian beware! The heart of the Moslem girl hath been low before him as the thrones of her race lie under the feet of his warriors—but now, now it shall rise and sting and hate!" and with a frantic bound she sprang from the pavilion.

Meantime, Isabella and the knight walked down the shaded paths, or among charming openings, till, suddenly turning an angle, and gazing down an open vista between the trees, they paused to view, unobserved, a picture which called the fires of jealousy to Don Enrique's heart.

Pendant from the gnarled and twisted branches of a giant cedar hung a swing, whose cord was of interwoven tapestry and gold, and upon its cushioned seat was poised the slender girlish form of the beautiful

Lady Manuella, while the young Ponce de Ripperda was standing by her side.

Never had Manuella looked lovelier than then, with the fading sunset-light falling upon the flower-crowned head through the tree branches, and an arch-sportive expression of childlike enjoyment upon her lips.

Her robe was of amber satin, with rich embroidered bodice and flowing sleeves.

Once braceleted arm was bare, the snowy hand grasping the golden rope; the other hand was covered with the long glove worn by the ladies of the time.

One embroidered glove had fallen to the mossy turf at her slippered feet.

The Cavalier Ponce de Ripperda wore trunk-hose and frock of rich Genoa velvet, embroidered sleeves and collar, and point-drooping hat, with feather fastened by a rosette of brilliants, and his hair in flowing locks, after the fashion of the age.

A smile of unwonted tenderness rested on his handsome lips, and he had evidently been addressing some gallant or lover-like remark to the fair Lady Manuella; for her graceful head was bent slightly in a listening attitude, and as the knight and Queen Isabella paused unobserved to gaze upon them, they started and looked questioningly into one another's faces.

"Most gracious lady, it seemeth that our fair hostess showeth rare satisfaction in the presence of yon gallant cavalier!" said Don Enrique, in a mortified, sarcastic tone, turning laughingly away.

"Nay, Don Enrique, 'tis but a young maiden's passing fancy! Ponce de Ripperda is a fit companion for the festival, the gay dance, or a lady's bower-room; but in faith not the lord who weds Cabrera's daughter. So, prithee hold no anger against our gallant page! The Lady Manuella spends the winter in our court, and then and there 'twill speed right well with thy wooing."

Re-assured by his sovereign's words, the haughty De Munoz courteously conducted Isabella along the garden paths till they had regained the castle; but a shade of anxiety lingered on his brow as he reverted to the smiling, happy faces of the twain in the woodland nook.

CHAPTER III.

THE brilliant starlight of a warm spring night sparkled over the royal palace in the proud city where Ferdinand and Isabella held their court.

Midnight had chimed from the great clock of the chapel, and the throng of beautiful Castilians and noble cavaliers had scattered from the halls where the sweet notes of the guitar and dulcimer had breathed measures for gliding feet.

The gay bolero, the wild cabuca, and the whirling waltz were over; the lights burned low; the night winds, redolent of citron perfume from the royal gardens, heard no longer the whisper of lovers' vows; and a deep hush rested over the palace.

Queen Isabella sat in her own apartment, and though the midnight was long passed, a strange unrest had hindered her from pressing the pillows of her couch.

She had dismissed her Moorish attendant, and now, in a rich dressing-robe, fell into a dreamy review of the events of the festive evening.

All had gone well; her warmest heart-wish seemed on the eve of fulfillment; the beautiful Manuella de Cabrera had shone the star of the court all that long bright winter; and the proud Don Enrique de Munoz had found uninterrupted leisure for his wooing, since the young Ponce de Ripperda had been sent to a distant city on a court mission which had detained him long.

Woman's heart though she possessed, Queen Isabella was politic; and she reasoned that, were the handsome page and Manuella separated for a season, all would terminate as she desired—in the betrothal of the favourite knight and most beautiful lady of the kingdom.

While the minutes passed and the midnight hush deepened, a little tap came on the half-ajar door of the queen's apartment.

"Enter!" cried Isabella, for she knew it must be some of her ladies.

Manuella de Cabrera glided softly across the marble floor, and again, as of old, knelt on the velvet foot-cloth before the queen's chair.

"I knew you were not yet sleeping, dear lady," she said, softly, "and so I dared come hither to-night."

"And what sendeth thee? Thou hast a boon to crave, sweet. I read it in thy wistful eyes. Speak, Manuella," said Isabella, with playful benignity, smoothing with caressing fingers the large ebony tresses that floated free over the slender, graceful shoulders of the beautiful girl.

"Prithee, hast any of our cavaliers been suing thy unwilling favour, that thou seekest protection of thy god-mother queen?"

"Nay, nay, not that—at least not openly—save the cavalier Don Enrique de Munoz, whom thou knowest, my queen, I cannot love," replied Manuella. "But dear, gracious lady, this is the boon I would crave of thee—that my heart pine for my lonely sire in the distant Castle of Segovia, and would beseech thy permission that I may return to him."

"Return to Segovia!"—and Isabella knitted her brow—"Nay, child, 'tis the pleasure of thy sire that thou enjoy thy youth amid gayer scenes. Thou art in truth perverse, Manuella, in heeding the suit of our noblest knight. We had thought this hitherto but maidenly shyness. Art sure thou canst not give favour to Don Enrique, the bravest cavalier in all Spain? Beshink thee, child; there is no knight on whom thy sire looks with such favouring eyes, nor thy queen. Decide not hastily, Manuella."

"Dear lady, I pray thee do not look angrily upon me. My heart is not mine own to bestow," humbly but firmly replied the girl, kissing Isabella's hand.

"Thou art not betrothed, Manuella?" asked the queen, quickly.

A burning blush suffused the maiden's olive cheek. It was sufficient assent.

"Whom hast thou loved, child?" again queried Isabella, with anxiety.

Manuella did not refuse a reply, but the words came tremblingly:

"Ponce de Ripperda."

For a moment an angry light sparkled in Isabella's clear eye, and she spoke impatiently.

"Tash! a well-favoured, generous-hearted youth of noble blood—but a mere lad beside the brave knight. Thou art a foolish child, Manuella! Dost thou sire know aught of this?"

"Nay; but Andros de Cabrera loves his only child too well to sacrifice her happiness. Ponce de Ripperda may not have led the queen's armies against the Moors; but he is brave and noble, and his love contents me. And now, weary of the great court where De Munoz pursues me with a love I can never return him, it but remains for me to depart. All the long winter have I hesitated to betray the faith pledged to De Ripperda; for dear lady, 'twas at the castle in last year's summer time we read each other's hearts—but now I have confessed all; and thou wilt not refuse my request?" said the girl, pleadingly.

Isabella sat for some minutes in thought ere she replied, and then her uneven accents betrayed her disappointment at the failure of her plot scheme.

"Since the matter hath gone thus far with thy foolish heart, child, my consent must 'en be given; I cannot help but think that thou hast unwisely rejected one of the noblest suitors who ever bowed the knee to lady love. Were Don Enrique a vain, trifling gallant, whose fickle heart might console itself with a new devotion, 'twould not thus give me anxious thought—but he hath oft assured me that no woman ever moved his soul before. But go now to thy pillow, child—the hour is late. On the morrow, mayhap, thou wilt bethink thee better than to prefer a dull old castle to the gay halls of thy queen!"

And with a half smile and half sigh she dismissed her visitor.

With joyful heart Manuella pressed her lips respectfully to Isabella's hand, and left the apartment, retracing her steps along the dim gallery to her own distant chamber.

As she crossed the threshold, a dark form suddenly sprang from its crouching posture behind a swaying silk curtain; the glitter of a small scimitar-shaped poignard cut the air; a sudden fierce pain cleft her shoulder, and Manuella, but dimly realized, ere she fell bleeding to the floor, that Zulu, the beautiful Moorish girl, with streaming hair and burning eyes, had done the deed.

A wild, shrill cry, that brought the queen from her apartment and the court-ladies from their pillows, resounded through the palace—then Manuella knew no more.

A week of dread suspense had passed, then Manuella, pale, still weak, but convalescent, sat in her apartment.

All attendants had been dismissed by the queen, and then followed the first words spoken upon the subject between the two.

"This tragic deed, dear Manuella, hath unfolded a new revelation," said Isabella, with grave features. "It hath shown me what I would not have credited from the lips of any gossip at my court. Poor Zulu seems truly penitent for her rash poignard-stroke, since she knows that thou didst not return Don Enrique's love, but hast loved towards him alternately with the wildest devotion—for, despite her rage, her faithful woman-heart is still bleeding beneath his feet!"

"And how wilt the matter end, dear Lady Isabella?" asked Manuella. "Thou wilt not surely punish poor Zulu further than she hath received in her keen remorse? She doubtless wildly loves De Munoz. And he—surely he must have breathed some love-vow

to the captive, else she had never been thus maddened?"

A look of intensest scorn passed over Isabella's face.

"Don Enrique, the noble knight, concerning whose honour, whose many virtues, whose spotless renown Queen Isabella hath declared to every lady of her court—ah, in good sooth 'twere a marvel did this gallant Don Enrique de Munoz sully his 'scutcheon by idly trifling with a Moorish slave girl! Nay, it were a marvel for Queen Isabella to thus mistake!" and the deepest sarcasm was in her tones. Then she stopped, and added, suddenly, "When the leech hath brought back the roses to thy cheek again, we bid thee to a festival where thou shalt meet this noble lover. Now haste in thy recovery; and a happy good morn, sweet Manuella!"

As Isabella left the apartment, the Moorish girl gazed in, and humbly knelt at Manuella's feet.

And so the day passed, bringing hues of health to the pale cheek; but the repentant Zulu still kept the station where she might anticipate the slightest wish of the beautiful lady who had so nearly fallen a victim to her jealous rage.

Another week had sped; and one sunny April day, a summons went throughout the palace for the entire court to assemble in the throne-room.

Manuella was bidden to array herself in her richest robes; and, by a strange coincidence, the beautiful Moorish girl was commanded to appear attired in such costume as never before was permitted to be worn by a servant in the queen's palace.

Snowy satin robes, and seed pearls woven in their ebon tresses—how like two brides they seemed—the Lady Manuella, and the almond-eyed, dusky-cheeked Zulu, and a murmur of wonder and admiration circled round the assemblage as they entered the hall of festival.

Isabella in her court robes, was on the right of her royal husband; and when silence was proclaimed, she spoke:

"Ladies and cavaliers, ye have been summoned hither to witness the marriage rites of our well-beloved Ponce de Ripperda and Lady de Cabrera!" and with these words the handsome young Castilian cavalier advanced from a throng about the king, and claimed the hand of his betrothed.

Again Isabella spoke; and this time a deeper hush fell on the assemblage—and one proud knight, though he bit his lip till the blood came, dared not gainsay his sovereign's will.

"And, moreover, since Queen Isabella is in mood to bestow fair lady upon gallant knight, it is her pleasure that our honoured and loyal Don Enrique de Munoz receive, for his wedded spouse, the beautiful maiden who hath so faithfully served about our person, and whom we, this day, create Lady Zulu de Segovia, and enrich with bridal dowry such as we bestow on any lady of our court."

It was a terrible blow to the pride of the false knight; but Queen Isabella was inflexible as she was just; and from her decision there was no appeal.

After a brief struggle with his haughty will, Don Enrique submitted with seeming grace; and an hour afterwards the archbishop solemnized two weddings in the royal chapel, and the grand Te Deum pealed jubilant alike at the consummation of the nuptials of the titled Castilian and the captive Moorish girl.

In after years, the solitude of the ancient Castle of Segovia was enlivened by the descendants of the Cavalier de Ripperda and the beautiful Lady Manuella; and the haughty Don Enrique—base as he had proved himself—could not but be won to love the devoted Moorish bride to whom he had been unwillingly wedded by Queen Isabella's just decree.

M. W. J.

WE doubt if any other college in either University can boast of having educated, like St. John's College, Cambridge, seven Lord Treasurers and First Lords of the Treasury. They are—William Cecil, Lord Burghley; Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury; Thomas Wrothesley, Earl of Southampton; Thomas Watson Wentworth, Marquis of Rockingham; Frederick Robinson, Earl of Ripon; George Hamilton Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen; and Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston.

HOW DIFFERENT NATIONS EAT.—The Moldavian-Islanders eat alone. They retire into the most hidden parts of their houses, and then draw down the cloths that serve as blinds to their windows, that they may eat unobserved. On the contrary, the islanders of the Philippines are remarkably sociable. Whenever one of them finds himself without a companion to partake of his meal, he runs till he meets with one; and however keen his appetite may be, he ventures not to satisfy it without a guest. The tables of the rich Chinese shine with a beautiful varnish, and are covered with silk carpets very elegantly worked. They do not make use of plates, knives, and forks;

every guest has two little ivory or ebony sticks, which he handles very adroitly. A Kamschatkan kneels before his guest, cuts an enormous slice from a sea-calf, and crams it entire into the mouth of the friend, furiously crying out, "Tapa" (there), and cutting away what hangs about his lips, snatches and devours it with avidity.

AHAB THE WITTY.

CHAPTER IX.

SIR RAOUL dismounted and assisted Leoline to alight, when Boabdil, taking her in his arms, bore her carefully up the irregular steps to the now open door of the stone chambers of Sadoc, where, to his infinite amazement, he was met by a maiden of such rare perfections, that pages might be written in praise of her beauty. It was Salome, the daughter of the Jew.

In stature she was about the size of Leoline, but her beauty was of that dark, rich character common alike to the Jewess and the daughters of Spain. The contour of her face much resembled that of the princess, but the deeper complexion imparted to it a different expression. Her eyes were large and lustrous, her brow heavy, and delicately pencilled; while her black hair graced her magnificent head like a crown.

But it was not her person only that surprised Boabdil, the loftiness of her air impressed him at once.

He surrendered his sister to this lovely girl without hesitation or distrust.

The two looked at each other for a moment, and experienced equal surprise and admiration.

"Father," said Salome, "attend to these strangers, while I bestow such care on this maiden as her fatigues and condition require."

"It shall be so, my daughter, though the God of Abraham knows only what will come of it."

Then to Sir Raoul and Boabdil he said:

"Gentle sirs, let your servants disencumber your horses, and they will find excellent forage in the valley of the Running Brook. It is not in my power to entertain persons of your seeming in a becoming fashion, but I furnish out of my poverty all that I may."

"No apologies, good Sadoc," replied the prince. "We have to excuse ourselves to you for the rudeness forced upon you by your unexpected and unwelcome guests."

"Like the foxes, we are compelled to dwell in holes and dens, in caves and clefts of the rocks. Both Moor and Spaniard are our enemies. We are tried oft and sorely. Our old men and our young perish by the edge of the sword. Marvel not, then, gentle sirs, that I gave you reluctant admission to my only place of safety on earth."

"I know your wrongs," answered Boabdil, "and were I King of Spain or Granada, I would quickly redress them. Fear not, old man, that I will ill requite your hospitality, or lightly betray the secret of your abode."

"Thanks, gracious Moor," said Sadoc, following Salome, who was aiding Leoline both by her arm and cheering words, farther into the mysteries of the stone palace. Sir Raoul and the prince were impressed at every step with its vastness, and freely expressed their wonder that human hands should have wrought such a habitation in the unyielding rock. Near the entrance it was dimly lighted; but as they proceeded the light grew clear, soft, yet intense. On the right and left were rows of columns skilfully fashioned and ornamented with antique devices. The roof was fretted with similar chisellings, while the handiwork of the floor was equally astonishing.

"God is great," said Boabdil, "and man inherits a portion of his strength and wisdom. The Alhambra itself cannot boast of architectural labour like this."

"Hast been there, noble sir?" asked Sadoc quickly.

Boabdil smiled that strange, sweet, characteristic smile, and replied, with a sigh:

"Sadoc, I have been there!"

Struck by the answer, or not perhaps so much by the answer itself as the air with which it was given, the Jew glanced inquisitively at his guest.

Sadoc, the Jew, was a man past middle age, a great deal bowed and beaten down by his warfare with the world. He was one who, clearly, had experienced his share of injury and proscription; for he had lived in those fanatical times when the Israelite was despised alike by the Spaniard and the Moor, when he had no security for life or property or the safety of wife or daughter. The dreadful persecutions of this wandering and tempest-tossed people form a melancholy and deplorable page in the archives of history.

Sadoc was meanly clad, and had continually an anxious and unassured demeanour.

His nose was large and sharp, his lips thin and voracious in expression, his chin rather prominent,

his eyes small, cunning, and ever vigilant. His forehead was like the glacis of a wall, retreating to his crown, which was bare, while the scattering locks around it were grey.

Nothing seemed to escape the restless vision of Sadoc.

Wherever wandered the eyes of the strangers, there went his.

He liked neither their surprise nor admiration of his stone castle.

He secretly preferred that they would walk on without noticing either column or capital, fretted ceiling or polished floor, sculptured wall or great marble basins, into which trickled diminutive streams of crystal water.

"All this," said Sadoc, "is cold and comfortless. It chills the heart, and makes one long for the warmth and cheerfulness of sunlight and cities. It is all that is left to a miserable descendant of Jacob."

"Not so bad a heritage as one might find," observed Mornay. "You have here both dryness and air, and many princes of the earth inhabit a less costly habitation. But we have not seen all of it yet, I imagine?"

"All that is worth seeing," said Sadoc, hastily. "Yet a little farther on, we shall come to a chamber much smaller than this pillared vestibule, which is provided with a few of the comforts and necessities of life."

"He tells not all," whispered Ahab to Sir Raoul.

Arrived at the chamber spoken of by the Jew, Boabdil looked around for Leoline and Salome, but they were not to be seen; they had disappeared in some deeper recess.

The apartment into which Raoul and the Moor were ushered was not large, though the ceiling was lofty.

Like the main entrance, it beamed with a soft light which streamed from many lamps that hung from the wall in bronze sockets.

The hardness and coldness of the floor was relieved by soft mats. Couches on which to sit or recline were appropriately placed near a fire, which blazed steadily within the arc of a fluted column, standing against and a part of the solid wall.

From whence this mysterious fire derived sustenance, neither Boabdil nor Mornay could divine; they saw it flaming with a constant brightness, as if a magician had worked it from some hidden fountain of fire beneath.

Boabdil could not help thinking of astrologers, soothsayers, and cabalists. The whole reminded him of that prediction which had been so baneful in its influence.

Two of the servants had remained with the horses; but all, imitating the example of Ahab, followed them.

These two now relieved the knights of their armour; an operation which Sadoc eyed with cover contempt.

"Father Sadoc," said Ahab, as he carefully deposited his master's armour in a niche, "the horses of noble knights differ very materially from those paltry hacks ridden by peasants and Israelites. The splendid chargers of these cavaliers, who are flowers of knight-errantry, are worth, at the very least, their weight in gold, with a diamond or two about the size of a peacock's egg thrown in; and consequently must not herd with common brutes. Methinks a castle like this would be incomplete without some accommodation for horses; and if one were to look sharply, he might discover a score of your own as nicely stabled and fed as ever quadruped was."

"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!" cried Sadoc, raising his withered hands.

"I know not what gods those be you mention, and care less; but I do pray of you to have some compassion on those superb Andalusian steeds which have, within a few hours, borne those iron pots that you see there, and those long poles with iron heads, and all that other iron, at a speed most incredible, against upwards of a dozen enemies, to their utter discomfiture, destruction, and defeat."

While Sadoc was framing an answer, a young girl tripped in.

Ahab instantly greeted her. She blushed, and appeared nothing loath to see him.

"My masters," he said, "this is Nicolette. The Prophet has granted me to see her before—or it might have been Satan. But it is all the same."

He looked slyly at his new master.

"Nicolette," he added, "thou art the prettiest girl in Granada, of which I will tell thee more anon. The tidings now in hand is, that your master desires you, without delay, to show me the way to the stables."

The effrontery of Ahab so confounded Sadoc, that his tongue utterly refused to make protest or remonstrance.

Nicolette looked at him, and either wilfully or really mistook his silence for assent.

"With all my heart," said she, and set off with the

lightness of a bird, followed by Ahab, whose conscience was so easily adapted to his soul, that if he carried a point, he gave himself no uneasiness about the way in which it was accomplished.

The stables to which the damsel led him were as curiously contrived as the castle itself; for the mountain, with its steep sides, and long spires of stone, and towering crags, naturally suggested the idea of a gigantic castle. Entering this stone stable by a massive door, overgrown on the outside with moss, and opening by a simple adjustment of levers, Ahab was struck nearly breathless with surprise at beholding a stud of twenty horses.

"Your master need never go on foot," he said, quietly, for the emotion of wonder never lasted him more than half a minute. "Inform me, fair Nicolette, why he keeps so many fine animals?"

"I know not," answered the girl, "and if I did I would not tell you."

"Perhaps," continued Ahab, while the servants led in the horses, "he bargains with those who are obliged to part with valuable beasts. Perchance he is a horse-dealer? But the evil one himself could not find him, if he wanted a horse ever so bad. This is a mystery. I shall solve it, or I shall not. What is the odds?" Then to the servants: "Bring in all the poor brutes, and do not be afraid that you shall treat them too well. There is room enough and provender enough, too, I'll warrant."

It was now Nicolette's turn to gratify her curiosity. "Who are these," she asked, "that you have brought with you?"

"One is Ali, one is Jakob, and—"

"If you are going to talk so stop where you are; for I care not a straw for your Ali and your Jakob. Who are those fine cavaliers?" said Nicolette, with a toss of her pretty head.

"A couple of kings that I picked up on the road, and am going to take care of it till I can get thrones for them. That is all and everything they are. Give me a kiss, Nicolette."

"A kiss is what you never had from me, and what you are not likely to get soon, if you do not discourse in a better fashion. Kings are not as plenty as pomegranates, that you can find them for the wayside, and at every turn. Come, I will have it out of you."

"Press me not to the wall, sweet Nicolette. One of the knights is my master, nominated and elected to that honour by my own dear self. I serve him whether he will or otherwise; for I make it a rule to follow every fancy that comes up. The other, my love, is a melancholy Moor, a wine-dealer, who has either lost a great quantity of wine or his sweetheart; but it makes no odds."

"A falsehood on the face of it!" returned Nicolette, pettishly. "But a breath ago you called them both knights, and knights were never wine-dealers in the world, nor can you make me believe so absurd a tale."

"The wine-dealer part was a slip of the tongue, or perchance an embellishment of my own. That he is an unhappy knight, is true; if you can learn more of him than that, you are welcome. With the exception of one little girl that I know, his sister is the most beautiful maiden I ever beheld."

Ahab ogled Nicolette in a fashion that gave her to understand that she was that identical little girl.

"I can bring you a damsel," retorted Nicolette, contemptuously, "that, in the matter of beauty, as much surpasses your Moorish lady as the sun surpasses the moon!"

While Ahab and Nicolette were thus entertaining themselves, Boabdil was scanning every passage, and watching every movement, hoping that he should presently see the Jewess return.

When considerable time had passed, and there were no signs of his desire being gratified, he began to inquire about his sister, and expressed a wish to see her immediately.

Sadoc left them to communicate his pleasure, and after a short lapse came back with his daughter, with an expression moody and dissatisfied.

The prince arose at her approach.

"Do her not so much honour, noble sir," said the Israelite, contracting his heavy brows. "Salome is but lowly born, and beneath your worship's notice."

The Moor made no response to this observation. He had seen the beauties of the Alhambra and fair women from other lands, but none ever charmed his eyes or touched his imagination as this Jewess had insensibly done.

She stood in his presence, not as an inferior, but with the prestige of a princess.

Not that there was any pretence in her manner, but the natural and spontaneous outflow of her character and quality imparted to her this regal dignity.

Grace, modesty, and lofty pride were so blended in her person and air that it was impossible not to admire and respect her.

Boabdil felt that he should lose another throne or gain something of more value.

Before Salome had opened her lips to speak, the

Moorish prince had surrendered the palace of his heart, with all the riches it contained.

She spoke; she said something of his sister, he scarcely comprehended what. He thought, however, that he was bidden to follow her, that Sadoc remonstrated, and that she, with a few calm words, conquered his objections. He walked behind her, in a singular state of incredulity and bewilderment. He passed numberless objects, curious and rare, without giving them a second thought.

The most exquisite creation of the palace of Sadoc was before him, moving in grace and beauty. He walked on in his new dream, and stopped, at length, where everything seemed to exhale a perfumed air.

A balmy odour filled his nostrils and soothed his senses.

Recalling his wandering faculties, he perceived that he had entered the bower of a lady. He discovered his sister reclining on a luxurious couch at the extremity of the apartment.

The walls were hung with the richest crimson drapery, and the floor covered with a carpet of velvet, soft and yielding to the tread.

In no direction could he turn his eyes without observing evidences of refinement and wealth, for which he was unprepared.

On a table of elaborate workmanship were drinking vessels of gold and silver. The tasteful and unique designs and arrangement of the silver lamps that poured a mellow flood of light and fragrance into this fairy chamber, did not escape the searching yet hurried examination that he made before addressing his sister.

Aroused, anon, by the sound of her voice, he crossed this marvellous bower and seated himself on a cushion at the feet of Leoline.

CHAPTER X.

MULEY ABEN HASSAN, King of Granada, was seated on a magnificent divan in the Hall of Ambassadors, with the officers of his court about him. He was a sovereign inured to war, and one who had made his name terrible to the Christians. He was skilful and crafty, plotting, and pitiless. He had grown grim and gray in power, and in contesting and keeping a throne ever difficult to possess in peace and safety.

At the time at which we have chosen to introduce him, there was a cloud on his brow, and a stern purpose in his hard, blue eyes.

He said to an attendant, without moving his head: "Bring hither that English knight who professes to come from King Ferdinand on important business."

He uttered not another word, and kept his eyes fixed on the floor till the messenger came back, followed by Sir Raoul Mornay, who, bowing somewhat haughtily to the king, stood waiting to be addressed.

But the old monarch was in no haste to do so. He surveyed leisurely, and withal contemptuously, the Knight of the Red Cross, who bore the ordeal with perfect tranquillity.

"Sir Raoul," he began, presently, "I have looked over those dispatches from Ferdinand of Spain, of which you are said to be the bearer. I find by the date that you have been long on the way."

The king fixed his keen eyes on Mornay.

"Your majesty is right," replied the latter. "Various accidents have obstructed my journey; the first and most fatal of which was an encounter with a band of Moslem outlaws, who mortally wounded Don Juan de Vera, who set out with those important papers, and scattered his retinue. The office of delivering the dispatches to your majesty was then intrusted to me by the dying knight, and I have made my way alone through an enemy's country to the foot of your throne."

"You must have met with many adventures during that time?" said the king, questioning.

"A number, your majesty," answered Sir Raoul, not quite so much at ease.

"I'll be sworn you found in your wanderings some of those famous old towers, the architecture of which is by many attributed to the Romans?"

"I observed many castles and ancient fortresses perched on the summits of cliffs and mountains; but I did not consider it expedient to visit them. But since the main object of my efforts is accomplished, and I am here in your presence, I wait your majesty's answer to the demands of my royal master, Ferdinand of Spain."

"You have let out the truth at last!" cried the King of Granada, angrily. "You have spoken of the demands of Ferdinand! Ay, and demands they are—demands of a most insulting and shameful kind. We will give your master neither slaves nor money, but Moorish scimitars and Moorish lances! If he will receive this kind of tribute, we will go half way to offer it, and every scimitar and every lance-head shall be borne by a Moslem warrior!"

Sir Raoul bowed gravely

"Is this the message," he asked, "that the King of Granada wishes me to bear to the King of Spain?"

"It is the answer that I shall send; but it is known only to the prophet who will carry it."

The officers of the court looked at each other significantly.

An anomalous smile played on the features of Muley Aben Hassan.

"Your majesty can dispute whom you will for this mission; but it is usual for the ambassador to bear back to his sovereign the proper answer to the missives which he has had the honour to receive and truly deliver. If your majesty intends to depart from this usage, I must of necessity submit, although I protest against the innovation," answered the knight, with stately gravity.

"Perhaps I may choose to reply to this insulting demand by the taking of a town or the sack of a city. At any rate, I will not be dictated to by an unbelieving Christian."

The Moorish king scowled, and twined his beard fiercely.

Sir Raoul drew himself up more proudly, and cast back the defiant and threatening glances of the courtiers.

He remembered the prophecy of Ahab, to the effect that he would find it easier to get into the Alhambra than to get out.

He read danger in the circle of dark warriors that stood around him; but he saw not one among them that had power to make him quail, or that he would not have been willing to meet, on foot or on horse, with sword or lance, battle-axe or mace.

"I am called after that order that kept the Temple, and guarded pilgrims on their way to the Holy Sepulchre. I wear the Red Cross, and am ready to do battle for the true religion. If there be any here who doubt my valour, I will meet such in the tented field, in the name of God and my sovereign lady."

Sir Raoul drew off his mailed glove, and cast it upon the floor of the Hall of Ambassadors.

A stern silence followed this bold challenge. Anon, a tall, haughty Moor stepped forward to pick up the gage.

"Hold!" cried the king. "I have myself cause of quarrel with this Christian knight. If, when I have done with him, he has the same mind and ability to meet you in mortal combat, you shall be free to accept the offer."

Then, turning fiercely to Mornay, he added:

"Tell me, Sir Knight, whether you did or did not pass some time at an abandoned fortress known as the Vermilion Tower?"

"He who is worthy to wear the Red Cross is above falsehood or prevarication," replied Mornay, without hesitation or fear. "I did pass a night and a day at the place you have named. Thirsty and hungry, weary and lost, I was most willing to seek rest, food, forage, and shelter therein, as any other wayfarer would have done in a similar strait."

"Mark well this concession, my nobles! El Zagal, are you listening?" He cast his eyes at the tall swarthy officer who had stooped to take up Sir Raoul's gage.

"Sire, I have heard the words of this haughty Christian," he replied, with a dark look at Mornay.

"Whom saw you at Vermilion Tower?" continued the king.

"I came not hither," cried Sir Raoul, indignantly, "to be questioned on any matter foreign to my mission. I am not a witness but an ambassador, and while I am here represent the majesty of Ferdinand."

There was an angry murmur among the courtiers.

"Reflect, choleric knight. Be not over hasty in your temper; you will presently learn that I have small respect for you or your king. If you would return to Spain, be somewhat more moderate in your replies, and less punctilious about points of honour."

Hassan stroked his long beard, and struggled to conceal his chagrin.

"There was one in that tower," he wanted, his voice shaking in spite of his iron will, "in whose fate the glorious kingdom of Granada is involved. I am not speaking for myself but for my people. I have striven with my heart, and if I have not mastered I have risen above its affections. My life draws towards its evening, and it matters not, so far as my individual self is concerned, how soon I rest with my fathers; but I love Granada, and would save it from the rule of one who would betray it to the unbeliever. Were it not for this prediction, I would descend from my throne, and with joy relinquish it to Boabdil. Such, however, is not my intention. I will save Granada!"

Hassan paused, and for a moment bowed his grey head.

A solemn silence prevailed in the Hall of Ambassadors. No one dared to speak.

It was seldom that the lion-souled king displayed emotion.

The English knight only maintained his com-

poise, and he alone had courage to address the monarch.

"Let the instincts of the father rise superior to the sacrilege and impiety of superstition," he said. "Cast from you the trammels of credulity, and put to the sword all astrologers, soothsayers, and magicians in your kingdom. Recall your brave and noble son from his persecuted exile, and seat him at your right hand. Do this," continued Sir Raoul, raising his hand, and delivering his thoughts with great fluency and force, "or the execrations of all good men and women will follow you to the tomb, and outlive your glory and fame!"

Every officer and warrior trembled at the audacity of the ambassador of the Castilian crown.

El Zagal expected to receive an order for his instant death.

The king raised himself slowly and painfully, as if he wrestled with an unseen burden too heavy to bear.

There was a certain wildness in his expression, and his blue eyes for a moment did not become fixed upon any object, but wandered vacantly about the sumptuous apartment.

Several Damascus blades were half drawn from their scabbards, but went quietly back when their masters saw the visage of Hassan.

Some of these fiery courtiers were of the proud race of the Abencerrages.

"There are seasons, my lords," said the king, presently, in a hollow voice, "when the weaknesses of our earthly and mortal composition obtain a temporary ascendancy over the stern duties of the sovereign. But, by the blessing of Allah, you have seen this for the last time. I am resolved, as ever, that the sword shall give the lie to seer and prophet, and Granada shall stand!"

Instantly the temporary mildness of his countenance passed away. The fierce gleam returned to his eyes and the cruel firmness to his lips.

"Guards," he exclaimed, "take away this Christian dog, and cast him into the deepest dungeon of the Alhambra! Were he a hundred times an ambassador, and a hundred times a Knight of the Red Cross, I would teach him a humbler port and a more becoming reverence when he stands in the presence of a crowned king! Away with him!"

Muley Aben Hassan stamped impatiently upon the floor, and the guards, closing about Sir Raoul, hurried him hastily from the presence of the king.

CHAPTER XI

It has been seen by the foregoing chapter that Sir Raoul, faithful to his trust, after seeing Boabdil and his sister in a place of safety, visited the Alhambra and presented those important missives which he had received from the expiring Don Juan de Vera; also what befell him when he went to receive Hassan's answer.

After being dragged from the Hall of Ambassadors, he was deprived of his arms and armour, and with much insult and abuse, conveyed to one of the dungeons of the tower of Comares, where he was left to reflect on the vicissitudes of fortune.

He regretted that he had not listened to the counsel of Boabdil, who had painted to him, in faithful colours, the danger of the enterprise; not the least of the peril arising from the fact that he had been seen by the Moslem soldiers and Abaddon, the magician, at the Vermilion Tower, aiding one whose death was resolved on by the hard-hearted monarch.

But it was one of the rules of knighthood never to complain of bodily pain or injuries that could not be helped. Instead of leaving his loaf of bread and pitcher of water untasted, he ate of the one and drank of the other, deeming it his duty to preserve health and life as long as practicable.

His dungeon was entirely dark; he could not see the nearest object, and even his stale loaf and earthen pitcher had to be groped for when wanted. It was as lonely and discouraging a situation as man could be placed in; and knowing the implacable temper of Hassan, he had little to expect, either from his justice or his mercy.

The image of the princess, however, comforted him in his reverses. Her beauty now became more exalted in his imagination than when he had occasional access to her presence; so much does absence enhance the value of what is beloved. He still retained her scarf, which he had concealed beneath his armour before obtaining audience of the king, and taking it from his bosom, pressed it to his lips as if it had been the relic of a saint.

About midnight of the night following his incarceration, he was awakened from his first sleep by a stream of light falling upon his eyes. Looking at the grated window, he beheld the face of Abaddon, and also the curious coiled lamp that he had before seen carried by the hand of Zegrin. He was not a little

startled at these appearances, but soon recovered his tranquillity.

"Begone!" exclaimed Sir Raoul, recalling the events of their last meeting. "I would witness no more of your jugglery. Of your treachery and your villany I have already ample proof."

"Christian warrior," said Abaddon, with serenity, "thou hast as little faith in my art as in my truth. A person, however humble, may be a useful friend or a dangerous enemy."

"He who deceives in one thing will not scruple about deceiving in another. He who lies about the stars and stoops to the nether world for knowledge of the providences of God, never can commend himself to my confidence and judgment. Had not my plate-mail been of trusty temper and honest make, the ball from your matchlock would have ended alike my aspirations and my existence," answered Mornay, without the least exhibition of temper.

"Nay, Sir Knight, I discharged no matchlock," said Abaddon.

"It matters not, old man, whether your own hand sped the messenger or the hand of an accomplice or subordinate; the act was in truth yours. Pass on with your rod, your book, your astrolabe, and your vile-looking lamp, and leave me to the repose of an honest man."

"Hast thou so much time that thou canst afford to waste a part of it in sleep?" asked Abaddon, with a sinister expression.

"God only knows how much I may have, but I will make the most of it while it lasts. What is your business here?"

"I am sent by the king to cast your horoscope."

"The king troubles himself unnecessarily. I disbelieve in your art, and care to know no more of the future than heaven may deign to reveal by dream or vision, or sudden enlightenment of the mind. I care not to step out of the natural circle of my life to search into mysteries that concern me not," replied the knight, with solemnity.

"All that affects not the supreme will of the king."

With that, Abaddon unlocked the door, and attended by Zegrin, entered the prison, without apparent fear or hesitation.

"Your confidence is great, old man. How know you but I will seize you by the throat and strangle you? I hold your life as surely in my hand as if I had sword and dagger. Thy wrinkled flesh would crumble like parchment in my grasp."

Mornay looked penetratingly at Abaddon, whose calm, blue eyes met the scrutiny unmoved.

"Thou wilt not harm me," he said, quietly, while Zegrin brought in a small table, inscribed all over at the top with singular shapes and cabalistic characters. On this magic table he placed his iron-clasped book.

"I know not that," answered Mornay. "Be not too certain. Consult now your gods and see what death you will die."

There was an uneasy and transient sinking of the magician's eyes. He governed himself and said: "To know my own fate is the only thing denied to my sublime art. I can no more solve the mystery of my own life and death than I can lift myself by clasping my knees. Seest thou not, oh Christian! that knowledge hath its beginning and its end, and that there are set bounds to the powers of man?"

Abaddon raised his eyes, and for a moment appeared lost in contemplation of divine mysteries.

"I have," he added, anon, "somewhat examined the predestinated pathway of thy course. I have passed a night in abstruse calculations and awful converse with the spirits of mid-air and the spirits of nether earth; and both the stars and spirits agree that thou art near the most critical period of thy life."

"I could have told you that and saved you a night's vigil, and all that communion with the planets and the occult inhabitants of air and Hades. You see before you a Christian knight, who fears not death, when met in the career of honour, and received in the discharge of supposed duty. You have revealed nothing I did not know."

Sir Raoul smiled. Abaddon was disconcerted.

"Thou art too hasty at conclusions," resumed the latter. "Death is the common penalty of mankind, but there are different methods of cancelling the debt. Some pass away with ease and serenity, others go with lingering agony and inexpressible wrenches of pain, that add thousand-fold to the common horrors of dissolution."

Abaddon stole a searching glance at the knight.

"Old man," exclaimed Mornay, laying his hand suddenly upon his arm, "disguise not your meaning in such artful and cunningly-chosen verbiage! Speak out at once, and say that your master and sovereign, the cruel and crafty, has sent you to threaten me with torture and the horrible engines of his wrath. Go back, and say to him that I am a Christian knight, and will be torn in pieces, dragged joint from joint,

and die by protracted and evil ingenuities, rather than compromise my honour or betray his son!"

"These words would sound well in a romance for women; but from men, who know the mutations of life and the power of kings, they are foolhardy and arrogant. No one cares to die, however much he may vaunt of his courage. Humble yourself before Hassan, confess your error in aiding a traitor to escape, make known his place of concealment, and you may yet live to do many knightly actions," said the magician.

Zegrin, who had been mute and attentive, now spoke in his soft and feminine voice:

"My great master, Abaddon, is reputed very wise. Do not scorn his advice or discredit his prophecies. He is not that kind of magician that prates of things whereof he is not certain. If he inform you you will be beheld at dawn, at dawn you will be headless. If he predict for you the torture-chamber, be assured that you will become acquainted with its dreadful engines."

Sir Raoul, impressed by the voice and manner of the youth, watched him attentively while he was speaking.

"Zegrin," answered the knight, curling his lip, "another garb might become your person as well!"

Zegrin depressed his gaze to the floor, but did not change colour.

"With the brows, and hair, and eyes, and voice of a woman, the apparel of one would not ill befit you."

Zegrin's cheeks flushed slightly. Abaddon frowned and exhibited annoyance.

"Turn, oh Christian, thy thoughts from vanities!" he said. "To thee it is of the least importance whether Zegrin be a boy or a damsel. Call him what he seems, and what his name indicates. He hath a gentle port, but his soul is courageous, and equal to the mysteries of my art. Receive the parting admonitions of an old man, or I swear by the bones of the Prophet, that thou wilt miserably perish! Say to the king or his servants, 'I will deliver Boabdil into your hands.'"

"You know me not! To me life is secondary to honour. The mistress of my world would love me better dead than living, if I fell gloriously on the field of battle, whence brave men should not fly."

Abaddon appeared at a loss for an answer to this manly and chivalrous speech.

His eyes fell on the scarf which Mornay had partially thrust into his bosom.

"What frippery is that?" he demanded. Then to the youth: "Zegrin, what thinkest thou of that gay bit of stuff trailing from the knight's doublet?"

"It is the favour of his lady," he replied, hesitatingly, evincing surprise.

"These Franks," muttered Abaddon, "are idolatrous! They make deities of their women. So infatuated are they, that they will often perish for a trumpery piece of cashmere like that."

"The Christian ladies must be happy!" sighed Zegrin. "But," he added, "that is not the gift of Christian maidens. Observe you not, great master, that there is a crescent embroidered upon it?"

Mornay examined the scarf, and noticed, what he had not before observed, a diminutive crescent wrought on one of its corners.

He beheld this emblem with a feeling of secret sorrow; it reminded him that Leoline's faith differed from his own.

Eagerly he besought heaven that the cross might at some time occupy the place of that infidel emblem. "Dost thou love her who bestowed that favour?" asked Zegrin.

"I confess, before heaven and you, that I daily and hourly give her the best incense of my heart!" replied Sir Raoul, with an earnestness that made the youth start.

"The more need," said Abaddon, coldly, "that thou shouldst live." Taking up his book, he added, with a pitiless sneer: "One living knight is worth a dozen dead ones, and no maiden lives that will not forget the former for the latter. Sir Raoul Mornay, be wise! Life is the first great necessity of all things else, inasmuch as love, riches, and honour are predestinated upon it. If you foolishly throw your life away, you not only obtain an eternal divorce from your lady-love."

These were the parting words of Abaddon.

Again the book, the staff, the astrolabe, and the serpent-lamp vanished with their possessor.

(To be continued.)

WE LIVE IN DEEDS, NOT YEARS.—A pleasant, cheerful, generous, charitable-minded woman is never old. Her heart is as young at sixty or seventy as it was at eighteen or twenty; and they who are old at sixty or seventy are not made old by time. They are made old by the ravages of passion, and feelings of an unsocial and ungenerous nature, which have can-

kered their minds, wrinkled their spirits, and withered their souls. They are made old by envy, by jealousy, by hatred, by uncharitable feelings, by slandering, scandalizing, ill-bred habits, which if they avoid, they preserve their youth to the very last, so that the child shall die, as the Scripture says, a hundred years old. There are many old women who pride themselves on being eighteen or twenty. Pride is an old passion, and vanity is grey as the mountain; they are dry, heartless, dull, cold, indifferent; they want the well-spring of youthful affection, which is always cheerful, always active, always engaged in some labour of love that is calculated to promote and distribute enjoyment. There is an old age of the heart that is possessed by many who have no suspicion that there is anything old about them, and there is a youth which never grows old, a lover who is ever a boy, a Psyche who is ever a girl.

HOW JITOMIR WAS TAKEN.

It was a dark cold night, and the snow lay thick and crisp upon the ground, when two travellers sought shelter at the hut of Mikhail the smith.

A light gleamed from the solitary window, and the sound of lusty blows echoed from within as the travellers approached the portal.

Late as the hour was, the smith was at his work. But when the taller of the two travellers knocked loudly at his door, he suddenly ceased work and quite a pause ensued before the small window was cautiously opened and a female from within inquired:

"Who's there?"

"It was Katrine, the smith's pretty sprightly wife.

"Travellers benighted in the wood," was the response.

"What do you wish?"

"Shelter and refreshment," replied the traveller who had before spoken.

"Which you will not refuse if you are true Poles," added his companion, whose voice instantly proclaimed her sex.

"A woman!" cried Katrine. "The saints pardon me! And I am keeping you in the cold all this time."

She quickly unbarred the door, and invited the travellers to enter.

"Come in, lady," she said, hospitably. "You are heartily welcome to all our humble home affords. Let me take your cloak. Sit here," placing stools by the fire. "Husband, fetch the cordial; the poor lady is almost frozen."

The good woman—or girl, we should say; for she was scarcely twenty—bustled about to make the travellers comfortable.

She was cheerfully seconded by her husband—a stalwart, large-chested fellow, with a ruddy complexion, bright blue eyes, and a shock of light hair that made his head look something like a mop.

Katrine, on the contrary, and as often happens in marriages, was a *petite*, black-haired, roguish-eyed fairy of a woman, with a dimple in either cheek; a rural little beauty; a wild flower blossoming in the woods, and "wasting its sweetness on the desert air."

The travellers, when they threw off their cloaks, appeared to be people of some consequence; for the man wore a rich military undress uniform, and the lady a costly robe trimmed with fur.

The man apparently was in the vicinity of thirty-five years of age, and the lady was some ten years his junior.

Their features were pleasing and well-cast, and both possessed an air of aristocratic breeding.

"Thanks, my friends," said the male traveller, when comfortably seated before the fire of huge logs—"thanks for your timely hospitality. We were nearly lost endeavouring to cross the mountains; but, guided by a light from your window, we fortunately reached this spot alive."

"To find shelter, fire, and a supper," added Mikhail, pleasantly. "Not so bad in a storm. Try a bit of this excellent bear's head—a real Russian."

"But not so bad as the name would infer," interrupted his wife. "Taste a mouthful, lady; pray do."

"You do not appear to be admirers of the Russians, friends," said the male traveller.

"Admirers?" echoed Mikhail, fiercely. "If I had my will, I'd strangle—"

"Hold your silly tongue, do husband," cried Katrine in alarm.

"Speak out," said the traveller. "There is nothing to fear from us."

"Fear?" exclaimed Mikhail, scornfully. "Bless you, sir, 'fear' is a word unknown in the Polish language."

At that instant a bugle brayed faintly out in the night air.

All sprang to their feet; for all had heard that

sound before. It denoted the approach of the dreaded Cossacks.

Katrine opened the window, and gazed cautiously out.

"Soldiers are descending the mountain from the fortress," she whispered, in a fright. "They approach the cottage rapidly."

"Anna, we are lost!" exclaimed the male traveller.

"Save us from our cruel persecutors," cried the lady, appealing to the smith and his wife. "My husband's life will be sacrificed. Oh, save us, as you hope for mercy!"

"Hush!" returned the smith. "I guessed what you were when you entered. I can put you in a snug place. Here is a concealed door, leading to an apartment excavated in the hill at the back of my hut, where I keep the arms that I make over-hours for our brothers in the good cause. I was at work on them when you knocked at the door. The knout or a walk to Siberia will reward us if you betray our secret, you remember."

"We would die a thousand deaths sooner," responded the traveller, as he led his wife through the secret door.

Mikhail carefully closed it after them, grasped his hammer, and resumed his work.

"To work, wife," he cried. "We must amuse those Muscovites."

There was the sound of horses' hoofs without, the jingling of spurs, the clash of sabre-sheaths, the loud command to "halt," and then came a thundering knocking at the door, and a hoarse voice cried:

"Open the door to Colonel Wadislaff."

"Wadislaff?" exclaimed Mikhail—"the commandant of Jitomir. It will not do to trifle with him."

And he quickly opened the door.

Colonel Wadislaff, quite a young man, but dissipated in appearance, and haughty and overbearing in manner, stalked in, followed by half a dozen Cossacks.

"Slaves!" he cried, arrogantly. "Why did you keep me at the door?"

"Pardon, your excellency," answered Katrine, with a low curtsy. "My husband was very busy at his work, and he is rather noisy with it, sir."

The colonel gazed at her with a stare of open admiration; and an exclamation with sounded like "How beautiful!" came from beneath his heavy moustache.

"Search the hovel!" he cried, to his soldiers. "Mikhail Porski, you are suspected of secreting arms."

"I—I? Why, bless you, colonel! it's a mistake."

"That I'll answer for," interposed Katrine, promptly.

"Pretty one!" responded the colonel, a smile lighting up his dark visage. "your word will have great weight with me. But beware how you deceive. You are Poles."

"There's no denying that, your excellency," affirmed Mikhail.

"Are you satisfied with our paternal government?"

"More than satisfied, colonel."

"Let your conduct prove your assertion. What is the meaning of the footsteps traced in the snow over the mountain to your door?"

Mikhail looked blankly at his wife.

"Beware!" continued the colonel. "It is known that traitors are lurking in the mountains—the rebel Count Zavisowski and his wife. Now, some of the footmarks are evidently those of a female."

"My wife's."

"What induced your wife to be out on such a night as this?"

"She was looking for kindling-wood in the forest."

The colonel seemed satisfied with this explanation.

"My friend," he resumed, after a slight pause, and with more condescension than he had before shown, "would you be rich?"

"Who wouldn't?" answered Mikhail, sentimentally.

"A thousand silver roubles will be paid to any one arresting the count and his wife."

"A thousand? All silver? No brass?"

"Of course. Be vigilant, and the roubles may be yours."

The colonel then withdrew, followed by his soldiers, and the sound of their horses' hoofs was soon heard in the distance.

Mikhail directed his wife to look from the window, and see if any sentinel had been posted, before he released the count and his wife from their place of concealment, for they were indeed the fugitives of whom the soldiers were in pursuit.

"Husband!" exclaimed Katrine, "one of the soldiers returns."

Mikhail grasped his hammer.

"You answer the knock," he said, "and if he is impudent, I'll knock him!"

Katrine went to the door, returning with a note in her hand.

"The colonel is coming back," she said, as she placed the note in Mikhail's hands.

"What for?"

"For me."

Mikhail flourished his hammer in a furious manner.

"Listen," continued Katrine. "Have you any faith in me?"

"Implicit, dear."

"Then leave this Muscovite Adonis to my treatment."

"Agreed. But don't let him touch you. Paws off, or down comes my hammer."

"There, go into the closet now, and remain quiet."

She pushed him in as she spoke. She was only just in time. There was a knock at the door. She opened it, and Colonel Wadislaff entered the hut. He glanced around, and appeared pleased at finding her alone. His vanity led him into the belief that she was waiting for him.

Of course the wife of a humble blacksmith would be flattered at the idea of attracting the attention and notice of a colonel in the army, and the commandant of the strong and important fortress of Jitomir.

"Katrine," he began, lifting his hat gallantly, "I am here."

"Dear me, sir," she answered, "why did you come back? Have you lost anything?"

"My heart, fair one, to you."

"Perhaps it's better lost than found," was the covert reply.

"I cannot conceal the delight," he hastened to say, "that your charms have inspired me with. Such grace and vivacity, buried in this rude hovel, is a sin against nature. Be mine the agreeable task to rescue it, and transfer it to a more befitting sphere!"

"I am quite contented where I am."

"Contented with this grinding poverty? I love you to madness."

"Love me? What fun!"

"Be merciful."

"That is what the oppressed Poles pray you to be to them."

"Pretty moralist! Permit me to assist you a trifle?"

He drew from his pocket a purse heavy with gold.

"I can assist myself, thank you."

"You are poor."

"I am rich in love."

"Words cannot describe the impression that your charms have made upon my heart. I am enslaved."

"I hate slavery in any shape."

"Will you accept my friendship?"

He held the purse up temptingly before her eyes, and shook it until it jingled merrily, and the yellow gold gleamed through the meshes of the silk.

If Katrine could resist it, Mikhail could not; for he burst from the closet, and grabbed it eagerly, saying:

"I will. What's mine is hers, you know—it's all in the family."

"My friend," exclaimed the colonel, rather surprised and embarrassed at the sudden appearance of Mikhail and the loss of his purse, "I have returned to—"

"Do a good action," interposed Mikhail, as the colonel paused.

"His excellency is so very kind," added Katrine.

"Considerate," proceeded Mikhail.

"Just," followed Katrine.

"And honourable," finished up Mikhail.

"Hush!" cried the colonel, overwhelmed by this array of adjectives.

He was so thick-skulled that he could not perceive that they were laughing at him.

"I do not require these expressions of gratitude. Enough for you to know," turning to Katrine, "that I take a deep interest in your welfare."

"Ours, my lord," interposed Mikhail. "She is part of myself, bone of my bone."

"Be zealous in your fidelity to the emperor, and I will reward you."

"Thank your excellency," responded pretty Katrine.

And they both very humbly bowed the discomfited colonel out of the door.

As soon as he was gone, Mikhail brought the fugitives from their place of concealment, prepared them for their journey, and started to guide them on their way.

Left alone by herself, Katrine indulged in a train of reflection suggested by the events of the night. The colonel was the prominent figure in her thoughts.

A pretty figure he made of himself in loving her, as he termed it! Weak mortal, to try and persuade her to sacrifice her duty! How little was he acquainted with a woman's heart!

Why did he not give his gold and his fine senti-

ments to the great ladies of his own rank? Katrine had somewhere heard that they were brought up to flattery and love making. For her part, she did not understand such nonsense; plain words from honest lips suited her best.

Her meditations were suddenly interrupted by the window-casement being thrown open, and a man leaping into the room. She started up, and screamed. Nor was her alarm dissipated when she perceived that the intruder was Colonel Wadislaff.

"Be not alarmed, I entreat," he said.
"Not alarmed?" Katrine echoed indignantly.
"Not alarmed, when you come in in that manner, like a wolf into the sheep-fold?"

"But I must speak to you. The spell your bewitching beauty casts over me deprives me of reason. Where is your husband?"

Katrine thought a little fib might be of service, as the colonel might retire if he thought her husband was in the house, so she unhesitatingly replied:

"Asleep, where you ought to be."
"Have you considered my proposal?" he continued, by no means disconcerted.

"I have not."
"My destiny is in your hands. Have pity on me."
"Have pity on yourself, and don't be stupid any longer. Think of your position, and respect it if you can."

"Disdainful creature! am I scorned?"

"What else do you desire? Ask your conscience. Are your base proposals likely to inspire me with respect for you?"

"Think of your dependent state, and the luxury and riches I offer!"

"What! sacrifice honour? No, no, colonel, leave me to my destiny, and do you follow yours. There is something more sacred than wealth and vanity to be sought after—duty and obedience to vows pledged at the altar. Go home, and forget me; you will sleep all the better for it, believe me."

The colonel smiled grimly. He thought he knew a way to tame her.

"I am not to be schooled or defied. Your husband's life is at my mercy, beware! He is suspected of treasonable practices; a word from my lips, and he dies."

Katrine's heart stopped beating for a moment. She had never thought of Mikhail's danger. She must dissemble with this man, whose lips could pass sentence on all around.

"My lord, you judge rashly," she stammered. "My meaning was—that hurried friendships seldom prove lasting."

He thought she was relenting, and that he should triumph.

"I have always heard," continued Katrine, "that great folks tell great—hem!—that fine sayings and compliments are natural to them, especially where women are concerned."

"Test my sincerity," exclaimed the colonel, earnestly. "Demand any trial you please. My life is at your disposal—nay, more, my honour."

"I would not touch a bit of it," returned Katrine, with a spice of her old sarcasm, "because I feel assured that you've none to spare."

"Every wish you have shall be gratified."

"This is a serious consideration. Come again to-morrow."

"No—fly with me to-night. Why defer our happiness?"

"Enter the castle with you? A pretty scandal for your soldiers to talk about. No! If—mind, if—I ever did take such a step, I should come alone and disguised, or not at all."

"Anything you desire," cried the elated colonel. "I will remove the sentinels."

"And cause more surprise. Where's your head? But I believe all colonels do not possess that necessary article. Is there no way that I may pass the gates without observation or remark?"

"Only one—by giving the password of the night."

"And that is?"

"Alexander."

"Alexander?" repeated Katrine. "I'll come. Oh, I'm very naughty; but it's all your fault. Oh, that deluding tongue!"

"That acknowledgment!" cried the enraptured colonel. "Moments will count as ages until you are in my arms."

"Go away, do, with your insinuations."
The colonel was anxious to have one kiss by the way of instalment; but Katrine would by no means submit to this; so he was forced to take his leave with the delightful anticipations her words had conjured up.

Ten minutes after, Mikhail returned.

"They are safe, wife," he cried.

"I wish we were, husband."

"What do you mean?"

"More mischief."

"Speak out. Who is it? What is it?"

"The colonel."

"The foul fiend!" cried Mikhail, furiously.

"I do believe that he is related to that individual. He came back just after you left."

"Again? And his object?"

"I was his object; but I objected. He wanted me to fly."

Mikhail seized his hammer.

"Stop. Where are you going?"

"To the castle."

"Do be patient."

"Patient under such wrongs? Never—his life or mine."

"Cunning is a much better weapon to use against him than force. Now, what would you give to be master of the fortress?"

"Life! Nay, a hundred lives!"

"You are very liberal with other people's property. Have I no share in your existence, sir?"

"Pardon me, dear."

"Open your ears. Alexander."

"Who's he? That's the emperor's name."

"In that name enter the fortress and conquer."

"I don't understand you."

"Dull creature, hear me! The colonel, in his love-sick mood, betrayed his trust to me, by giving the password of the night—Alexander is the word. This was to enable me to enter without question, and to serve his wicked purpose. Now do you take the advantage of this, assemble our friends and neighbours, and secure the castle for Poland, for our down-trodden country."

"Glorious!" shouted Mikhail. "Wife, wife, you are a witch."

"Lose not a moment, or the prize may slip through our fingers. You've a good cause."

"And stout arms to help me, and plenty of weapons, thanks to my industry," said Mikhail, as he hurried forth to summon his friends.

The Central Committee had been at work, and the province had long been ripe for a revolt.

The conspirators mustered in hot haste at the hut of Mikhail, who had been appointed chief of the district, in spite of his humble position, for his sturdy honesty was well known.

They were soon ready for their desperate expedition. Desperate it might well be called.

Three hundred men, poorly armed and equipped, to attack a veteran regiment in their stronghold, and that regiment commanded by a brave and skilful officer, for such Wadislaff had proved himself on many well-fought fields.

"Good-by, darling," said Mikhail to his wife, "When you hear the castle-bell sound, our work will be done. Come, then, and see how many of us are alive."

They departed stealthily, moving in little squads towards the fortress.

Moments seemed hours to the watchful Katrine; but at last the sonorous pealing broke over forest and wold.

Muffling her cloak around her, she hurried through the snow, with beating heart and feverish pulse, on to the castle.

The attack, thanks to the password, had proved a complete surprise.

But one man had been hurt on either side—Colonel Wadislaff—who, persisting in a mad resistance, had been struck down by Mikhail's hammer.

And that was the way Jitomir was won.

G. L. A.

SUPERSTITION IN NAPLES.—The Syndic of Naples, Baron Noll, wishing to avoid the panic which might be occasioned by the frequent carrying of the Viatium, in the event of cholera spreading in the city, expressed a wish through a friend to the vicar of the diocese that bells might not be rung as it passed through the streets.

To this request the vicar replied that having consulted the Divine Being, he had been informed that the custom could not be dispensed with! The bells, it should be stated, are not church bells, but hand bells, which are carried by men who precede the Viatium, and who ring them with a vigour far exceeding that of a town crier. Mingled with these are other men carrying lighted wax candles.

At the time of Palmer's execution, the town of Rugby had been so mixed up with the murderer's villainies, that the officials of the place desired to change the name, and a deputation called upon Lord Palmerston, when prime minister, in 1855, to permit them to do so, asking his lordship to suggest a name.

Lord Palmerston, ever alive to wit, immediately replied, "Suppose you call it Palmer's Town?" In social assemblies he was always witty and always to the point. At a horticultural meeting at Romsey, where prizes were given away for the best-conducted patients, the best cultivated gardens, the neatest cottages, &c., Lord Palmerston was asked to officiate, and to every one of these poor people he had something

pleasant and flattering to say. To one poor woman to whom was awarded ten shillings, he said, "I have read somewhere that 'a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband,' but to you I have to present two crowns. Happy indeed must be the husband that possesses such a treasure."

PRESENCE OF MIND.

It is a question we may often ask ourselves, though with little certainty of arriving at the right answer, Have we presence of mind? Are our faculties likely to be quickened by a desperate emergency, or to be scared by it? Shall we be more or less than ourselves when the occasion arrives? Shall we know the precise thing to do when a blackened ruffian enters our bedroom at two o'clock in the morning? Shall we be able to extemporize a tourniquet on the spot when our clumsy friend shoots off his leg or his arm? Shall we be prepared, when a railway smash comes, to extricate passengers, remind the guard of his duty, and warn the coming train? or shall we rather be like him who wriggled himself out of the prostrate carriage, trampling on women and children, his fellow-travellers, to effect his own deliverance? Shall we be the suggester of the opportune ladder which rescues the despairing tenants of the three-pair back from the flames, ourself descending with a child under each arm, and a baby between our teeth? or shall we lock the door on help and egress, and get smothered behind it along with all who trusted us? Shall we stand motionless and serene when a swarm of bees settles on our head and face? Could we seize the exact moment to rescue the sinking swimmer, and acting out all the Humane Society's directions, when everybody else forgets them, restore the drowned to life? In short, shall we be foremost when a man is wanted? And shall we do all these feats coolly and calmly, seeing our way at least risk to ourself, simply because we are self-possessed, and so can take in every point of the position?

In one's youth, when one is in the habit of building castles, a man can usually settle all these things very much to his satisfaction. Then it is a matter of course that he is one who, if "called to face some awful moment" big with great issues, "is happy as a lover," who,

If an unexpected call succeed
Come when it will, he's equal to the need.

Nothing is wanting but the opportunity; whether the need were to arrest the runaway horses of terrified beauty on the very brink of the precipice with the strength of our single arm, to catch up the exploding shell from under the commander-in-chief's horse-hoof, or to escape from a dungeon deeper than that of Chateau d'If by a course of consummate stratagem.

But experience has shown most persons the one speciality of an emergency—that of ignoring precedent, and making things look the reverse of all our calculations; and we have learnt, too, that dreaming and reverie are not friends to prompt action, however apt they may be to raise pictures of it. There are few of us who have not known what it is to want an answer, to be dumb when repartee was called for, to be helpless in an ordinary social dilemma. A hundred times we have been in a fix. Shall we do ourselves more credit where life or death are concerned than under these petty ordeals? Thanks to the peaceful order of most lives, and to the freedom from extremities which blesses every-day existence, we may still flatter ourselves that the great occasion, when it comes, will find us equal to it; for as yet we probably have not been tried.

In the meanwhile, it is not amiss to consider what are the qualities and circumstances likely to produce this enviable state of mind and nerves. In the first place, the presence of mind that men admire most is so largely mingled with self-sacrifice that the two are sometimes confounded; while, in fact, self-sacrifice often does more harm than good, unless guided by this heroic form of discretion. The poor muslin-clad girl who rushes to the rescue of her blazing sister often only compasses two deaths instead of one, for want of presence of mind.

But, not to touch on horrors like these, this quality must in almost every case preside over self-devotion to make it of any real service. We find the scene lately enacted on Goat Island, Niagara, to the point here.

Professor Ruggles (we could have wished the gentleman a more euphonious name for the sake of both actors in the story) had politely descended a steep bank to recover a lady's parasol, when he lost his footing and slid to the edge of a frightful precipice, where he caught hold of the roots of a tree. The temporary support trembled and loosened under his weight. It was a question of minutes or seconds. The ladies of the party shrieked for help, but none was at hand.

At length one of them bethought her to tear her

dress and shawl into threads, her companions contributing their wraps to the same purpose. She then tied the lengths together, and while the ladies held firm hold of one end, they tied a stone to the other and lowered it to the Professor, who, taking hold of it, walked slowly up the bank till he gained secure footing at the top. Then we are further told that the girl who had saved him by her happy thought fainted, and was carried home unconscious. Now what would the sacrifice of the most becoming dress in the world have served but for the presence of mind which led her to tie each knot firm and secure under the crying necessity for haste?

A bishop new to his honours had the misfortune to upset the ink over a gorgeous table-cover in his entertainer's state bed-room. It was an impulse sadly wanting in presence of mind which led him to sacrifice the downy cambric handkerchiefs with which his wife had furnished his pectus with a clumsy and fruitless endeavour to repair the mischief.

One essential for this quality, however acquired, we hold to be a sense of responsibility. We must not expect it from people who are habitually kept under and checked in the exercise of their free will.

A WINTER IN ITALY.

By H. B. S.

(Continued from No. 153.)

ITALIAN WINTERS.

A WINTER in Italy, to persons accustomed to the latitude of England, in many respects strikes one as a curious phenomenon.

Here in Florence, for example, even in the middle of December, one is followed in every public place by importunate flower-sellers, bearing baskets full of carnations, rosebuds and heliotrope, of which they sell large bouquets for twopenny. One gets really *blasé* with so many flowers, they are so cheap. Our table and mantel-piece are always kept supplied.

In the Casine, also (the public promenade) hedges of *lunaria* come in blossom, and in all the villas about one sees hedges of monthly roses in full flower.

And yet, for all that, the air here produces such a sensation of cold, that one requires twice the clothing that one would in a similar state of the thermometer at home, and it seems impossible for the fire to warm one.

The old English residents, aware of this dreadful chill, have stoves in their houses, but the real Italians born here have no fires, nor any conveniences for any. The lower classes carry about with them little pots of coarse yellow earthenware filled with coals and ashes, over which, when their fingers become too numb for useful purposes, they are warmed. Footstoves such as may be carried about, are on hand in the shops.

In Florence there is very little snow falls in the winter. But the mountains being covered with snow all around us, a warm day here draws down the cold air from them with a glacial chill that goes through marrow and bone.

The streets of Florence, like most of the old continental cities, are high and narrow, excluding the sun, and when this icy wind draws through them, the cold is terribly severe, and unless people are very careful in defending themselves with abundance of clothing, they are sure to get an influenza or lung fever.

The houses made to be hired to English residents are, however, quite comfortable, with fire-places and stoves, and one may make one's self very warm by burning wood enough. Nothing astonishes the natives more than the quantity of fuel it requires to keep an Englishman warm.

If you would allow your padrone to arrange for you, he would kindle a fire of two great round knotty logs set up endwise, in a triangular-shaped fireplace, which fills the corner of the room. So long as he can demonstrate to you that these sticks are actually burning, however slow be the progress of the combustion, and though it all take place on the under side of the stick, which is not, of course, visible to the eye nor appreciable to any of your senses, so long he considers you very singular and unreasonable in stirring, blowing, and otherwise agitating in the premises, with a view of getting yourself warm.

Getting warm is no part of their idea of the purpose of a fire. A fire has been discovered to be a matter of English etiquette, and accordingly one is made, and so long as it can be proved to exist, what more do you want? Privately they intimate scorn of the whole proceeding, and think the English make themselves cold by their fires.

For themselves, having never contemplated warmth in the cold season as any part of the wants of a rational creature, they go contentedly about, only warming their fingers when they become actually too numb for movement.

Italy is a very dangerous place to send invalids,

unless accompanied by very judicious friends and nurses. It is true that there is a far greater number of days in the year that such a person can go out, and that exercise in the open air can be kept up far more regularly; and if they have friends to see that they go out only at proper times, well clothed and carefully guarded—that their dress at home is sufficient, their rooms airy and sunny, and well warmed, they do actually make a great gain.

But often a young man in England spits blood or shows other signs of bronchial or pulmonary weakness, and the doctor advises him to go to Italy to avoid the chills of winter at home. Here he comes, perhaps alone; takes dark, damp lodgings, with stone floors and one fire-place, designed to warm the outside of the house, since all the heat goes up the chimney. He walks out, perhaps solicited by bright skies and a balmy air, without his overcoat, and the chilly streets, and damp churches, and cold picture galleries soon bring on the evil which already is begun, soon he is down with lung fever, and adds another stone to the stranger's burying-ground. This has been the history of many a young man sent to Italy for his health.

The fact is, that nowhere is one obliged to observe more caution and care to avoid themselves of the obvious advantages and avoid the insidious dangers of the climate than in Italy. As a general rule, the exercise of delicate persons in the winter must be taken in the middle of the day; they must avoid particularly exposing themselves to the damp chills of approaching evening. This is a difficult thing to do, as the sunsets are peculiarly beautiful, and the twilights long and seductively glorious.

Young men are more apt to fall victims to these dangers than women, because their habits make them impatient of those minute cares which are necessary to the stranger here, and because they generally are in sufficiently good health to come without the superintending care of wife or sister.

An invalid should never be sent to Italy alone. It is the risk of sending to soon and certain death. With care, however, a residence in Italy may be made of the utmost benefit. There is scarcely a day when pedestrian exercise is impossible. One has every inducement to it in various beautiful excursions to objects of interest, and a winter is over before one has realized that it has commenced.

(To be continued.)

THE same kind of plague of flies that is remarked on in an English paper as having visited the North occurred also at Vichy about two months ago. The description of them was precisely the same; the way they were destroyed was with quicklime, and they lay on the ground in several places two and three inches thick.

BUST OF RICHARD CORDEN FOR VERSAILLES.—While Mr. Wooster, the well-known English sculptor, is executing a bust of the late Richard Corden to be presented by Mrs. Corden to the Emperor Louis Napoleon, M. Olivia, a French sculptor, has been engaged on another bust, which is just finished, and which was ordered by the Emperor to be placed in the gallery at Versailles.

THE people of New South Wales boast of their acclimatizing success. A pair of English blackbirds have built a nest in the Botanic Gardens and have young; a nest of English skylarks has been found, and four English sparrows have been liberated. It is to be hoped no English farmer will be imported with his patent sparrow-killing gun and sparrow-brain for many a year till the crop of sparrows is large.

SCANDINAVIAN EXHIBITION.—The difficulty which occurred in consequence of the determination of Sweden and Denmark to hold exhibitions of Scandinavian industry in their respective capitals at the same period, has been met by the abandonment of the project for the present, on the part of the authorities of the latter country. The Stockholm exhibition, therefore, now stands alone, and is fixed to open on the 15th of June, 1886.

LORD PALMERSTON took the foremost part in the election of Leopold as King of the Belgians, and the King has never forgotten the debt of gratitude which he owed to the deceased statesman. It is said, and doubtless true, that the King shed abundant tears when he heard of the death of "his old friend Pam," as he familiarly called him, and the King at once wrote a letter of condolence to Viscountess Palmerston.

PAST PREMIERS.—The following is a list of Past Premiers during the present century:—Jan. 1801, Right Hon. W. Pitt, having held office from Dec. 1793; March, 1804, Mr. Addington (Lord Sidmouth); May, 1804, W. Pitt; Feb. 1806, Lord Grenville; March, 1807, Duke of Portland; Dec. 1809, Mr. Perceval; June, 1812, Lord Liverpool; April, 1827, Mr. Canning; August, 1827, Lord Goderich; Jan. 1828, Duke of

Wellington; Nov. 1830, Earl Grey; July, 1834, Lord Melbourne; Dec. 1834, Sir R. Peel; April, 1835, Lord Melbourne; August, 1841, Sir R. Peel; June, 1846, Lord J. Russell; Feb. 1852, Lord Derby; Dec. 1852, Lord Aberdeen; Feb. 1855, Lord Palmerston; Feb. 1858, Lord Derby; June, 1859, Lord Palmerston; Oct. 1866, Earl Russell.

DISEASES OF MEN, ANIMALS, AND PLANTS.

THERE is a fund held in trust by the University of London, of which the objects are to provide an institution for the study and treatment of the diseases of lower animals. It is burdened by many conditions which have obstructed the practical use of the sum hitherto. With accumulations, it now amounts, we believe, to some thirty thousand pounds, and the bequest will lapse if not utilized. We understand that it is now under consideration what steps can be most advantageously taken in the matter. We hope that the University may be persuaded to establish an institution for Comparative Pathology and Physiology.

Let us mention some of the facts which indicate an urgent necessity for the further systematic and enlarged study of the diseases of man in connection with those of animals, and even of their relation to the vegetable world. It is well known that several of the most fatal of human diseases which assume the epidemic form are communicable to animals. Scarlatina is believed to have been originally derived from a similar disease in horses. It is held that measles also was originally an epizootic communicated to man. The communicability of cholera to animals was experimentally established by Dr. Lauder Lindsay. *Herpes circinatus*, the common ring-worm, is frequently communicated to man from the calf, which suffers often from that disease; it may be taken also from cats, as has been demonstrated.

Dr. Murchison dwelt lately, in his valuable papers on scarlatina, on the relations of scarlatina in animals to scarlatina in man during the recent epidemic in London. Dr. Letheby noticed that a similar epizootic prevailed amongst hogs, and that scarlatinal pork was largely sold in the markets. It must be always remembered that it was by comparative studies of disease in man and beast that Jenner established the practice of vaccination; and it seems even probable, if we may venture upon a suggestion which has really much more than mere hypothesis to support it, that a study of scarlatina by a similar experimental method might lead to results of great protective value.

A curious circumstance has been mentioned to us in connexion with the present cattle plague which may be referred to here. We learn on the authority of Dr. Tilbury Fox, who has largely studied similar questions, that from many quarters representations have been made that a disease resembling cattle plague appears to be engendered in horses by eating fodder spoiled by the red rust. The disease has, in fact, nothing whatever to do with cattle plague, but it is an acute catarrhal affection. The red rust is a fungus affecting grass, which has the remarkable effect of producing that condition, and this year has been so singularly fertile in forms of odium that, from their local abundance, they have caused apparent epidemics.

The diseases arising from eating ergoted rye afford another well-known example in point; and the prevalence of pellagra amongst the peasants of Lombardy has been directly traced to the *sporisorium maidis*, a fungus of the maize. The causation of a disease precisely resembling measles, by a fungus of wheat and of flax seed, has been established by Dr. Salisbury and Dr. Kennedy; and it has even been shown that by inoculating healthy children with this fungus, *uredo* or penicillium—for it has not been fully examined—a bastard disease resembling measles, and affording, it is said, protection against measles, can be produced.

The connexion of the Russian epidemic with disease in rye, and of the Irish fever with the ravages of the odium in the potato, will suggest themselves to the mind.

The mere allusion to these interesting and still unworked facts in pathology suffices to show the wide and profitable field for investigation which has been uncultivated for want of such an institution; and the University of London will confer a great service on the public if they can utilize their funds for such a purpose.

THE WIND AS A MUSICIAN.—The wind is a musician by birth. We extend a silken thread in the crevice of a window, and the wind finds it and sings over it, and goes up and down the scale upon it, and Paganini must go somewhere else for honour, for lo! the wind is performing upon a single string. It tries almost everything on earth to see if there is music in it—it persuades a tune out of the great bell in the tower, when the sexton is at home asleep; it makes a mournful harp of the giant pipes, and it does not

disdain to try what sort of a whistle can be made out of the humblest chimney in the world. How it will play upon a tree until every leaf thrills with a note on it, whilst a river runs at its base in a sort of murmuring accompaniment. And what a melody it sings when it gives a concert with a full choir of the waves of the sea and performs an anthem between the two worlds, that goes up, perhaps, to the stars which love music most and sang it first. Then, how fondly it haunts old houses; mourning under the eaves, singing in the halls, opening doors without fingers, and singing a measure of some old song around the fireless and deserted hearths.

MAUD.

CHAPTER XXII.

Him, Sir Bedivere,
Remorsefully regarded drowned in tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words.
Mario d'Arthur.

AFTER midnight, when everything was still, save the tramp of sentinels, and the distant cries of camp-followers, who prowled among the dead, this de-throned queen heard distinctly, as sensitive people hear whispers, the sweep of a woman's garments along the turf.

Then the draperies were uplifted and rustled back again, leaving a third party within the tent.

Softly, and with a timid hesitation, the intruder moved toward Margaret, and bent over her, thrilled with such tender pity as only a woman can feel for her sister woman.

"Oh, lady, can I help you! Is he quite dead?" Margaret looked up. The compassion in that sweet voice sent a shiver through her. The pity so eloquent in that lovely face fell upon her like sunshine on ice. Still she could not speak, but her poor, weak hands were slowly lifted, and the fingers worked together with an instinct of returning life.

"Ah me! ah me! He is cold—he does not breathe. How beautiful, and how still! Lady, dear lady, let me help you!"

Gentle tears were in this strange woman's eyes, her lovely features quivered with sympathetic grief. She made an effort to lift that lifeless face from under the stony gaze fixed upon it.

But Margaret started then, and flung her arms around the dead body of her son, guarding him wildly from the stranger's touch.

"Nay, let me," pleaded the strange woman. "I know—I know why it is that I may not touch him; but there is no one else to give you womanly aid in this terrible place; we two are the only women, except the camp-followers and timbrel-girls, who are flitting, like unclean ghosts, over the battle-field. Let me lift him from your lap."

Margaret still kept her arms around her son, and shook her head in a dreary negative.

Then Jane Shore—for it was that guilty but tender-hearted woman—went to a couch, which had been spread for the king, and smoothed the emerald-covered with the gentle touch of a mother arranging her infant's cradle.

"Let us lay him here," said Jane, with a gentle tact. "It is not meet that the son of a king should rest upon the earth. Sweet madam, give him up."

Margaret loosened her arms from around the dead, and a long breath came quivering through her lips.

Jane lifted the entrance curtain, and whispered a word to the sentinel who paced before it.

The man came in, and with more gentleness than his bluff strength promised, lifted the dead prince from the earth, and laid him on the couch which early in the evening had been prepared for the king.

Then Jane Shore motioned the man to withdraw, and covering the body with the rich drapery that fell from the couch, left only the pale young head exposed. The light from a silver lamp, which stood on the table, fell upon the face. The sweet calmness which often follows death had settled upon it, and a heavenly smile lay like moonlight there.

Jane stole softly to the queen, who still sat prone on the earth, with her head bent, and rocking to and fro with a dull, incessant motion.

"Look at him now," she whispered, kneeling down before the mourner. "See how the angels have touched his lips with smiles."

Margaret turned her black eyes toward the couch, and lifted herself from the ground with a dead, stony heaviness, as if a statue had risen from its recumbent position.

She saw the gentle whiteness of the face she had loved better than anything on earth, and moving toward it, fell upon her knees, moaning piteously.

Jane bent over her with tears wetting to her eyes.

"Oh, if I could but comfort you," she said, in a broken voice. "But how can I—how can I?"

Margaret all at once aroused herself, and flinging one arm over the dead, cried out, "He is gone! My God! Oh! my God! Everything has forsaken me!"

"But he is happy. It is better to rest in heaven than struggle on earth," said Jane, out of her kind heart, which could never be entirely hardened.

"But I—I am alone; and oh! how helpless! His prisoner, and alone!"

These words broke out from that tortured heart with a wail of such bitter grief that Jane began to tremble and weep afresh.

"Alone! Alone! Alone!" wailed the wretched mother. "Oh, if those eyes could but open. If they could but look into mine once more, we would go away together, and be content, without crowns, without sovereignty. Oh, my boy! my poor murdered boy! why did I bring you hither? It was he, our arch, cunning enemy who struck the blow."

"Oh, madam! do not say that. Do not think it," cried Jane, eagerly. "The king grieves over it. He mourns like yourself. It was his brother—his hard, cruel brother."

"I know—I saw it. Before the very eyes of his mother, they struck him down. My son! my son! Would to God I had died for you!"

These words broke up the stony anguish of that proud heart.

All its grief was now pure, womanly.

Margaret's head fell forward; tears welled up from her bosom in a bitter flood.

She sobbed till the sentinel outside paused in his walk to listen, and drew the back of his hand across his eyes as he moved on again.

But for these tears Margaret of Anjou would have died that night, when her heart was broken—that proud, strong heart which had battled so fiercely and suffered so much, but was so wounded, was condemned to live on.

Then Jane Shore knelt down and laid Margaret's head on her bosom, weeping over her with piteous tenderness; and the suffering queen, not knowing who she was, thanked her meekly for so much womanly kindness.

As these two women, so far apart both by nature and circumstance, knelt together, a female voice outside pleaded with the sentinel.

"I must see him. He was my betrothed lord," it pleaded, with plaintive earnestness. "Not even your ruthless king would keep me back."

Then Margaret burst into a fresh paroxysm of grief, for in that voice she recognized Anna of Warwick, the betrothed wife of her son.

"Let her pass, poor lady. Let—let her pass. God knows we mourn this mishap as much as she can. Let her pass."

It was Duke Richard's voice, calm and sweet, which sent deadly spears after those that had already torn Margaret's heart.

Then the drapery was lifted, and a fair young girl, white with terror and wild with grief, came into the tent, and fell down at Margaret's feet, with her great blue eyes, too wild for tears, turned shudderingly on the dead.

Margaret withdrew herself from Jane Shore's support, and gathered the young creature to her bosom with a gleam of comfort. She was something to protect—a creature more helpless than herself to soothe. Her sovereignty was gone, her crown turned to iron—but the woman's heart made her a queen still.

When Anna of Warwick saw that all was over, a faint, sick feeling crept around her heart, and she lay in those supporting arms silent and motionless, while Margaret tenderly caressed her and wept over her, half forgetting her own grief, as such women will, in compassion for the shuddering young creature to whom sorrow was so new.

Then Jane Shore, reminded of her own shame by the pure young creature whom she dare not touch, crept out of the tent, and wandered away alone, feeling painfully that the scene she had left was too sad and holy for her presence.

She did not betake herself to the tent which had been pitched for her accommodation back from the battle-field, but wandered down among the dead and wounded, where lanterns flashed out a gloomy light through the mists that settled on the field like a grey shadow.

Here she saw robbers of the dead flitting to and fro like spectres, and heard the riotous shouts of simbelstors revelling over their booty like hyenas wrangling for some unwholesome prey.

But Jane was anxious to make atonement for the one great wrong of her life by kind acts, and moved on through the uneven ground, turning aside whenever she heard a groan, to assist the sufferer, and braving all the horrors of a spent battle with the heroism of a warrior.

"Give me water! Oh, give me water!"

The cry came from a little hollow, whose margin was fringed by a hedge of hazel bushes on which the night was hanging drearily.

Jane went down into the hollow, trembling terribly, for the voice had startled her by its familiar sound.

"Who is it? Who is it speaks?" she said, holding her breath.

The wounded man was silent; the voice of a woman on the battle-field warned him of danger—for of all the fiends that rioted among the dead, they were over the most ruthless.

"Speak once more," faltered the woman, who hoped to expiate her fault by charity. "Speak, and I will help you, if I can."

Then John Halstead recognized the voice, and cried out, as with a new pain.

"I asked for water," he said, hoarsely; "but not from thee, woman."

Jane did not hear this. Away to the left she saw the glow of a lantern, which some one had set down on the earth, and probably could not find again.

She hurried to the spot and secured the light. Then a sound of water gurgling through the long grass reached her ear a little farther off, and she looked around for some hollow thing in which to convey some of the precious fluid to the man who had clamoured for it so eagerly.

An iron helmet rolled away from the touch of her foot, as she was searching around her.

It had been cleft in twain by the terrible blow of a battle-axe, but was sufficient for her purpose.

Down to the tiny rivulet she went, and eagerly dipped up some water from among the tangled grass. It was turbid and tinged with red; still she did not see that, but went her way, eager to help the suffering man, whoever he might be.

Jane reached the hazel hollow, and went down its slope, calling aloud as she moved.

"Have patience; I have found some water! A moment more—have patience!"

These kind words were received in dead silence. She stood still and listened. Nothing but the sigh of the wind in the hazel bushes answered her.

Not a sigh nor moan came up from that hollow, which was choked up with shadows and clouded with floating mist.

Down into what seemed to her unfathomable darkness she went, holding the lantern before her.

It shone up into her face as she went to search the ground, revealing all the horror in her blue eyes, and the sickening anxiety which had seized upon her.

Down in the depths of the hollow the black outline of a man defined itself through the grey darkness—a tall, stalwart man, with his head bare, and his limbs stretched out motionless, as if cut from dusky marble.

Jane held down the lantern and forced her shrinking eyes to look on the face.

It was turned on one side, and masses of iron-grey hair had been swept over it by the wind.

Holding her breath, and shivering from head to foot, the woman swept the hair softly back, and saw the face.

It was that of John Halstead—the man who had married her husband's sister.

Then a panic seized upon the guilty woman. She forgot the casque full of water, which she had set upon the ground, and dropped the lantern, which shed an awful light over those lifeless features till the sun quenched its radiance, and lifted the shroud of fog from thousands of dead bodies that lay stark and cold on the broad battle-field.

Through this rolling mist, and across that death-strewn field King Edward marched his victorious troops, before the sun was an hour old, on his way to London.

Following after his own brilliant escort were three litters: One contained Margaret of Anjou, utterly conquered, at last; another concealed sweet Anna of Warwick, and the third was curtained so closely that no one could catch a glimpse of its inmate.

But the nobles smiled on each other meaningly as it came up, and glanced at the king, who, more than once, rode back, and drawing the curtains with his own hand, spoke gentle words to the person within.

Thus Edward's army moved on from the battle-field of Tewkesbury.

Days went by, during which that victorious army swept its slow progress toward London.

At last the king, with an escort more magnificent than had ever followed a monarch before, entered the Tower—that mighty structure which was at once the palace of one monarch and the prison of another.

Two of the litters which left the battle-field followed the king within the fortress.

The other had quietly dropped out of the procession before it reached the walls, and disappeared.

When they entered the palace garden, the first litter was lowered to the earth, and Anna of Warwick

pale, grief-worn, and weary, was revealed. She cast a look of timid apprehension around, doubtful if she were prisoner or guest; but before she could step to the earth, Duke Richard had flung himself from his saddle and stood beside her.

"The king grants me the great boon of escorting you, his most honoured guest, to the presence and protection of her grace, the Duchess of Clarence," he said, with a gentleness that was almost humble.

A glance of mournful reproach filled Anna's eyes as she lifted them to his face; and he saw that a shudder passed through her frame.

She settled back in the litter, shrinking from the hand he offered.

"Sweet lady, do not fear me so," he pleaded.

"It was that hand," she whispered hoarsely.

"No, no! On my soul, no! Do not believe the slander! I strove to protect him! It was a rash servant that took away the life I would have died to save! Turn those eyes away—they kill me with reproaches."

Anna of Warwick shook her fair head with mournful slowness, and stepped from the litter, sighing heavily.

"Lead me to my sister, since it perforce must be so," she said, gently. "But first let me take leave of this unhappy lady."

"It is against the king's express order, and I dare not disobey him; but rest content in this, she shall be tenderly cared for."

With this assurance, Anna was compelled to be satisfied.

With a heavy heart and many a lingering glance at the closed litter that bore her queenly mother-in-law, she was led away toward the range of apartments occupied by Isabella, Duchess of Clarence.

Meantime Margaret of Anjou was carried into the close court overlooked by her husband's prison windows. Then, with premeditated cruelty, her guards flung back the curtains from her litter, and exposed her lying there, worn-out with fatigue, and haggard with suffering.

The face that had once been so beautiful, lay stony and locked beneath the masses of short hair, which had turned white as snow since that awful night which left her childless.

It was a miserable, broken-hearted woman that Henry VI. looked down upon from the prison window, to which he had been drawn by the tramp of feet in that usually quiet place.

At first he did not know her, the hair was so white, and the face so strangely old; but she rose feebly to one elbow, and looked upward with a forlorn hope of seeing him. A cry, so faint that it died in the utterance, broke from the wretched man. His arms were outstretched for a moment, and then he sank away from behind the rusted bars, and the soldiers carried her out of sight into the solitude of a more remote dungeon.

From this dreary place she issued five years after a helpless old woman.

Henry had been ill. Since the interview with his queen confinement had worn upon him terribly, and he was slowly sinking out of life.

His keepers saw this, for they loved the dethroned monarch, and pitied him, spite of their iron calling. Since his last capture they had deprived him of an attendant; so, when his feeble hands dropped away from the bars which shut him in from the woman he had loved, he lay upon the floor in a dead swoon for more than an hour, and might have died there alone, and thus saved his enemies from a miserable crime, but for their over haste.

It was nightfall when the royal cavalcade rode into the Tower, and the last red quiver of sunset died out from the window as Henry fell.

Slowly the atmosphere around him turned purple, and then deepened into a dull black gloom, which gathered around him like a pall.

A flambeau in the court sent arrows of red light through the bars for a moment, then the cautious movement on the stairs broke up the profound stillness, and a man came into the chamber with a small iron lamp in his hand.

He looked around the room so far as the light penetrated, and went up to the bed, which stood in one corner, searching, like a midnight robber, for its inmate.

At last he approached the window, and saw Henry lying near it senseless, and, to all appearance, dead. He touched the forehead and the thin hands lying on the floor, bruised by the iron bars they had grasped so desperately.

The man who had looked down on those pinched features was pale almost as they had become. Something more than sympathy or fear was stamped on that face.

He satisfied himself that the poor monarch was dead, and went his way, moving cautiously, as if the crime he came to perpetrate had been committed.

He was gone, perhaps, fifteen minutes. and when

he came back Duke Richard was with him, asking low, eager questions, which ceased the moment they entered the arched door which gave access to the tower.

A stranger might have noticed that no sentinel was there, and that the court was in profound darkness.

Richard, who was a strict disciplinarian, exhibited no surprise, but moved up the stairs with quick, noiseless step, followed by the man, who had shrouded the lamp he carried, while crossing the court, under his short cloak.

"He is here, your highness, close by the window, stark and dead."

The man gave a start as he spoke, and the lamp shook so violently that it almost went out; for Henry, whom he had left for dead, was sitting half upright on the floor, with his back pressed against the wall, and the long, blue folds of his dress falling around him like the garments of a monk.

Richard shrank from the glance of those pale, sunken eyes, and stood a moment speechless from surprise and bitter disappointment.

"Take thyself away," he said sharply to the man who held the lamp. "Set that thing upon the floor, and wait for me below."

The man obeyed, and Richard drew close to his prisoner, who was watching him eagerly.

"Tell me, was it her—was it my wife?" he inquired, with piteous meekness. "I would like to be sure; sometimes I dream of her, and it seems real as this. Tell me, did I see my wife, Margaret, as I stood by the window?"

Henry spoke faintly, and seemed to draw his breath with pain.

Richard regarded him keenly, and saw how feeble was the life that trembled in his frame; his answer was cruel, deliberate, murderous, for he calculated the effect of his words, and knew them to be deadly as poison, sure as the blow of a dagger.

"Yes, it was your wife. She has forced on a battle at Tewkesbury, and lost it."

"My wife! my wife!" wailed that feeble voice; and the thin hands that clasped themselves shook apart from their weak hold.

"All the traitors who followed her were cut down; some on the very altars of the sanctuary," said Richard, dealing another blow, which made that poor frame shiver.

"But my son—my son?"

Henry's voice rose to a feeble shriek, and his shivering hands clasped themselves convulsively.

"He was killed!"

A deathly grey fell upon that meek face; but there was no sound, save a faint rustle of garments, as the dead king settled downwards in the shadows, never to rise again.

"Come hither," said Richard, moving to the stairs, and calling out hoarsely. "Lift his body to the couch yonder, and put thy weapon out of sight; words are sometimes sharper than daggers."

"Is he dead?" asked the man.

"Ay; see to the rest."

Then the Duke Richard went softly downstairs.

(To be continued.)

SECOND CROP OF PEAS.—One of the most remarkable of the many singular instances which we hear on all sides of double crops this year has occurred at Muskham, on Mr. Chouler's farm, where a second crop of green marrow peas is being gathered. The first crop was sold to Mr. Widnall, of Nottingham, as early marrow peas, when, owing to the dryness of the weather, some of them were shed. The land was ploughed over and sowed with mustard, and from the shed peas a second crop sprang up and attained full growth.

With reference to the storm which broke and darkened Westminster Abbey at the close of the service on the occasion of Lord Palmerston's funeral, attention has been drawn to "Miss Berry's Journal," in which the following occurs regarding Lord Nelson's funeral:—"The only really impressive moment was that in which the coffin first touched the ground. At that instant the sky, which but a few minutes before had been clear, poured down at once a torrent of rain and hail, and a sudden gust of wind arose, the violence of which was no less remarkable than the moment at which it took place."

AN IRONCLAD FOR TURKEY.—Within the last few weeks the Turkish Government has sent over an order for the construction of a powerful ironclad frigate, designed equally for offensive or defensive purposes. This vessel, the designs for which have, it is understood, been prepared at the request of the Sultan, and with the permission of the Admiralty, by Mr. Reed, the Chief Constructor of the Navy, is intended to be plated not only along her broadside battery, but from stem to stern, with plates eight inches in thickness. Some idea of her size and

tonnage may be formed when it is stated that she is intended to carry an armament of thirty-three of the largest guns, while her machinery, which will be of a minimum of 1,500-horse power (nominal), will propel her through the water at a mean speed of fifteen knots an hour. The Turkish Government is in treaty with the Thames Iron Shipbuilding Company for the construction of the vessel, which will embody all the structural improvements introduced in the Minotaur, Bellerophon, and others of our ironclad ships, rendering her perhaps the most powerful ironclad vessel in the world.

STATISTICS.

SPICES.—The imports of cinnamon have increased this year as compared with 1864, having amounted to 493,970lb to July 31, as compared with 368,785lb in the first seven months of 1864. The receipts to July 31, 1863, were, however, 506,732lb. The imports of ginger to July 31 this year were 24,210 cwt., as compared with 16,872 cwt. in 1864, and 7,912 cwt. in 1863 (corresponding periods). The imports of nutmegs to July 31 this year were 213,033lb, as compared with 467,592lb in 1864, and 241,444lb in 1863 (corresponding periods). The receipts of pimento were 18,508 cwt. in the first seven months of this year, against 35,459 cwt. in 1864, and 9,712 cwt. in 1863 (corresponding periods).

CONSUMPTION OF ALIMENTARY MATTERS IN FRANCE.—M. Payen, the well-known chemist, gives the following statistics, which are said to be authentic. France consumes annually in round numbers, about 700,000,000 gallons of milk, of which Paris takes nearly one-third; nearly 120,000 tons of cheese of all kinds, the share of Paris being only 5,000 tons; 290,000 tons of sugar, Paris consuming 20,000 tons; nearly 38,000 tons of coffee, Paris using 4,500 tons; 20,000,000 gallons of beer, of which Paris drinks an entire sixth. The total quantity of wine produced in France is set down at nearly a thousand millions of gallons, and valued at twenty-two millions sterling, or about fivepence per gallon.

RAILWAY IRON FOR INDIA.—It is worthy of remark that the exports of railway iron to British India have made a considerable stride this year, having amounted to 63,386 tons, against 35,593 tons in the corresponding period of 1864, and 60,692 tons in the corresponding period of 1863. There is room yet for an immense number of branch lines in India, although the main routes have, perhaps, been pretty well constructed; but financial considerations exert, and justly so, a very powerful influence on the work of extension. Hitherto the results achieved are not brilliant. Thus, while in 1861 the burthen entailed upon the Indian Government by its 5 per cent. guarantee was 1,659,891l., the net revenue earned was only 350,692l.; in 1862 the guarantee absorbed 1,982,295l., and the net profits were 488,534l.; in 1863 the guarantee amounted to 2,323,605l. and the net revenue to 803,293l.; and in 1864 the guarantee required 2,567,743l., while the net profits are estimated at 1,080,000l. The deficiency that had to be made good by the Indian Government to complete its guarantee was 1,309,199l. in 1861, 1,493,761l. in 1862, 1,513,372l. in 1863, and 1,487,743l. in 1864. Notwithstanding these present discouragements, it may be fairly questioned whether the best means of making the recently constructed lines profitable is not to embark in a number of branches or feeders. The enormous peninsula of Hindostan cannot be accommodated by ten or a dozen great arterial lines, however energetically worked or intelligently constructed; link lines are required to radiate in all directions.

A WELSH MEMORIAL TO RICHARD COBDEN.—It is proposed to erect in South Wales a statue to the memory of Richard Cobden. This proposal is made by working men in the neighbourhood of Swansea, and they have shown their sincerity by subscribing £100.

As far as the friends have learnt, the property of the late Lord Palmerston has been thus awarded:—Broadlands has been left to Lady Palmerston during her life, then to revert to the Hon. W. Cowper, and in case he has no son to the Hon. Evelyn Ashley. The Irish estates have been left to his Lordship's own family, the Sullivans, and the Welsh slate quarries have been divided between Lady Shaftesbury, Lady Jocelyn, and her second son.

THE cold weather of the last few days has compelled the directors of the Jardin d'Acclimatation at Paris to order the parrots and foreign birds which have proved so ornamental perched along its garden walks to be housed for the winter. Their *salon d'hiver* is the spacious greenhouse on the right of the entrance, where palms, camelias-trees, and all that is rare and beautiful among exotic shrubs thrive and attain a height and vigour which astonishes visitors.

The effect is admirable of the scarlet and blue parrots; the bright green paroquets, the soft grey Australian doves, the glossy black and green-winged hoppers, the bronzed jays, with their metallic hues, fluttering and flying amidst the magnificent foliage of the rare plants of this charming winter garden.

SCIENCE.

THE manufacture of silk was more than one thousand years in travelling into England from the shores of the Bosphorus. It had been practised four hundred years in Italy before it crossed the Alps.

THE PROBLEM OF THE TORPEDO.

THE torpedo is gaining the attention to which it is entitled. It is an important matter, as it will most assuredly impose upon all maritime States the construction of navies, adapted to a change in naval warfare that is inevitable.

The torpedo is not, however, a novelty. So far back as the time of Queen Anne, a vessel of about 300 tons was blown up in the river Thames. A history might be afforded of torpedoes; but we can dispense with history; we require to know what can now be accomplished by torpedoes in the present state of naval architecture, steam navigation, and of the various contrivances and means of applying explosive agents under the surface of the water.

In January, 1845, an experiment with a torpedo, upon a small scale, was made in the Downs. The object of the experiment was to illustrate the experiment made by Captain Warner in the summer of the preceding year off Brighton, when he destroyed most completely the John of Gaunt by his "invisible shell," or torpedo in a very compact form. The two experiments were differently conducted; but, nevertheless, the smaller, as intended, threw some light upon the larger, and showed the application of torpedoes upon the ocean.

The experiment in the Downs was conducted in the following manner:—A large boat was turned adrift, which represented a ship at sea; a Deal galley of four oars, armed with a torpedo, represented a steamer of great speed adapted to the service of such an arm. The torpedo was launched overboard from the galley, which towed it to the object of attack. The course of the galley was such as to pass ahead of the large boat, the object of attack, and, by a proper adjustment and management of the tow-line, the torpedo was brought under the bottom of the boat, the galley going at the top of her speed; and when the torpedo was so brought up under the bottom of the boat, it exploded.

The explosion was such as to bilge the boat extensively, and to throw up fragments of the boat with a column of water to the height of about 30 ft. though the torpedo was charged with a few ounces only of explosive composition. The torpedo was exploded by pressure; it could explode only when in contact with the object of attack; the contrivance and arrangements for such mode of explosion are exceedingly simple, and equally safe in application. This short sketch may throw some light upon a subject of great national interest, but not yet understood by the multitude.—*A Naval Officer.*

THE directors of the East of Prussia Railway are now having iron boxes made, which will be fixed in front of the locomotives and filled with sand. By turning a cock, the driver can open them as required, and the sand falling on the rails, gives the necessary purchase for the wheels. This arrangement is, for the present, to be confined exclusively to the mail trains.

TIDES are affected by the state of the atmosphere. At Brest the height of high water varies inversely as the height of the barometer, and rises more than eight inches for a fall of half an inch of the barometer. At Liverpool a fall of one-tenth of an inch of the barometer corresponds to a rise of the Mersey of about an inch; and at the London Docks a fall of one-tenth of an inch corresponds to a rise in the Thames of about seven-tenths of an inch.

DECEPTIVE GEMS.—A rough and worn surface in gems is no sure test of antiquity, for Italian ingenuity has long discovered that a handful of newly-made gems, crammed down a turkey's throat, will, in a few days, by the tribulation of the gizzard, assume a roughness of exterior apparently produced by the wear and tear of many centuries. "In a word," says Mr. King, "though faith may be the cardinal virtue of the ologian, distrust ought to be that of every gem-collector." Here is another species of fraud. Antique stones bearing inferior intagli are worked over again by the Italian engravers, so that an apparently antique intaglio of good style is produced. The safeguard here is to examine the entire intaglio with a lens, when, if a fraud has been perpetrated,

some portions of the work will be found to possess a higher and fresher polish than others, while the design will be sunk to an unnatural depth in the stone. Setting aside the question of art, the truest test of antiquity, in Mr. King's opinion, is a certain degree of dullness, like the mist produced by breathing on a polished surface. This appearance he believes cannot be imitated by any contrivance of the modern forger. Another satisfactory proof is afforded when the engraving appears to have been executed almost entirely by the diamond point. Modern gems have been principally cut with the wheel, a minute disc of copper, rapidly revolving, and charged with diamond dust. In this operation the cutting apparatus is fixed, while the gem to be engraved is cemented on a handle, and is pressed against the wheel. Under the ancient method it remained motionless, like an etcher's plate, while the operator, working with his diamond point, had all the freedom of hand which the etcher possesses.

THE IRON PRODUCE OF FRANCE.

FRANCE produces more than 2,000,000,000 kilogrammes of wrought and cast iron annually. This amount, however, is less than her consumption, and she is under the necessity of supplying the deficiency by importations from foreign countries. The quantity of foreign metal imported last year amounted to 40,000,000 kilogrammes, and the quantity will be much more considerable this year, inasmuch as the imports for the first eight months of 1865 amount to 56,000,000 kilogrammes.

A Paris correspondent observes that French manufacturers could not consequently compete with foreigners were it not for a law enacted during the present reign, by which foreign iron may be imported free of duty on condition that it be re-exported in a manufactured state within a certain period. The articles so re-exported between the 1st of January and 31st of August, 1865, amount to 95,000,000 kilogrammes, and it is probable that by the end of the year, the foreign iron re-exported in the shape of machinery will amount to 150,000,000 kilogrammes, or double the quantity re-exported in the year 1863.

It is estimated that the wages paid to operatives employed in the manufacture of machinery exported that year, added to the profits realized by the manufacturer, amounts to 95,000,000 francs, and it is expected that it will amount this year to 200,000,000 francs.

It is this law which enables French manufacturers to execute the large orders they receive from foreign countries. For example, the machinery for two screw steamboats is at present being manufactured in Paris for Russia, and a machine of 2,400 horse-power is being prepared at Havre for the same destination. A manufacturer at Nantes is completing a fleet of lighters; a Paris manufacturer a number of dredging machines for Egypt; and a house at Bordeaux is just finishing an iron ship for the King of Prussia, together with the plated frigate *Ancona* for the King of Italy.

A war corvette, to be called the *Palestro*, has just been launched at La Seyne, near Toulon, where she was built on account of the Italian Government. The same company built three iron-cased gun-boats for the Ottoman Government, and has orders on hand for two iron-plated gun-brigs and a corvette of 250 horse-power for the Emperor of Brazil, two iron-plated corvettes of 300 horse-power for Italy, three iron-plated batteries for Turkey, and a variety of machinery for the Isthmus of Suez.

France is likewise indebted to her neighbours for coal. The quantity imported during the first eight months of the year 1863 was 34,000,000 quintals, which rose to 37,000,000 during the first eight months of the present year.

DROUGHT IN SEPTEMBER; RAINFALL IN OCTOBER.

—Mr. E. C. Hawkinson, Southampton, has written: "The extraordinary rainfall of the latter month, and the equally extraordinary deficiency of its predecessor, is worthy of notice. The rainfall registered for September is 0.11 inch, and for October 7.71 inches. Referring to a meteorological diary extending over a period of twenty-one years, I find that in no single month did so little rain fall as in September last, and in none so much as in October, the least quantity recorded for any month since 1843 being 0.17 inch—namely, in January, 1855; and the greatest being 6.46 inches, in March, 1848."

Dr. JOHN A. BOLTON, of Leicester, heats and ventilates Turkish baths with a current of heated air direct from the external atmosphere on the following principle:—"The fresh respirable air travels in an opposite direction to the fire, heat, and smoke in separate and distinct flues, in the manner of the arterial and venous circulation of the blood. The air is heated by being made to travel throughout its course in an opposite direction to the smoke current, the closest contiguity being maintained between the

two currents. The effect of this is, the abstraction of caloric from the smoke throughout its course, and the prevention of smoke escaping into the fresh air duct; so that, in the event of leakage, air will always enter the chimney, instead of smoke escaping into the air duct."

NEW THEORY OF IRON.

In a paper addressed to the Academy of Sciences, M. de Cazancourt, a proprietor of ironworks, expounds a new theory of iron.

Oxides of iron, he observes, have long been considered to be degrees of oxidation of one and the same metal, always appearing under a metallic form with absolutely identical characteristics, whenever chemically pure. Hence all the difference met with in various kinds of iron are exclusively attributed to peculiar chemical composition, and they are universally classed under three heads, viz., cast iron, steel, and wrought-iron, according to the quantity of carbon they usually contain.

And yet certain kinds of cast iron, identical in their chemical composition, appear so different from each other, and give such opposite results in working them, that our author thinks it necessary to distinguish them in practice.

On the other hand there are sorts of cast iron presenting the same composition as certain kinds of steel that, if analysis is to be trusted, are not distinguishable from certain kinds of iron. Hence, in metallurgy, the chemical composition of various sorts of iron is a matter of mere secondary importance, and the real characteristic to be taken into account, according to the writer, is the degree of oxidation of the ore from which they have been extracted.

Barzelius had, ere this, laid down the theory, that there were two sorts of iron metal, to which he respectively gave the names of *ferricum* and *ferrosum*; M. Cazancourt adopts this division, which represents iron under two allotropic states, just as is the case with sulphur and phosphorus. He therefore calls *ferrosum* the metal extracted from the protoxide of iron, and this, he says, has not yet been practically obtained in a state of purity, except in laboratories through the reducing agency of hydrogen. The nearest practical approach to it is what is called bright iron, possessing great hardness and fragility.

The quality of iron derived from the anhydrous peroxide is what our author calls *ferricum*. It yields malleable iron, but when alone is not convertible into steel any more than into bright iron. The common sorts of foundry iron are nothing but *ferricum* losing a part of its carbon, which it had absorbed under the influence of a high temperature.

According to Newton, the great comet of 1680, at its perihelion, was only distant from the sun by the 163rd part of the semi-diameter of the earth's orbit, where it would be exposed to a heat above 2,000 times greater than that of red-hot iron, a temperature which would instantly dissipate any substance with which we are acquainted.

MR. SMYTH stated that we dig annually 84 millions of tons of coal from our pits. The combustion of a single pound of coal, supposing it to take place in a minute, would be equivalent to the work of 300 horses; and if we suppose 108 millions of horses working day and night, with unimpaired strength, for a year, their united energies would enable them to perform an amount of work just equivalent to that which the annual produce of our coal-fields would be able to accomplish.

AVENTURINE.

JEWELLERS will soon have a new artificial stone at their disposal, thanks to a discovery recently made by M. Pelouze, the well-known chemist. In nature, mineralogists give the name of aventurine to a sort of brownish red quartz, interspersed with brilliant metallic points; but a happy imitation of this stone was discovered at Venice during the middle ages by an accident, a workman having by some mistake let some copper filings fall into a crucible containing coloured glass in a state of fusion.

For a long time the process remained a secret; in those days chemists were very careful not to let anything connected with their laboratories transpire, and used to leave their secrets to their heirs by will. Such precautions would be utterly useless in our days, modern chemistry having unravelled all the old mysteries, and effectually rendered all future ones impossible.

MM. Frémy and Clemandot, many years ago obtained beautiful specimens of aventurine by heating a mixture of 300 parts of powdered glass, 40 parts of protoxide of copper, and 30 parts of oxide of iron from a blacksmith's forge, and letting the composition cool very slowly.

M. Pelouze's new aventurine vies in lustre with the finest specimens of Venice, and is much harder than the latter, since it will cut glass.

M. Pelouze's formula is as follows:—250 parts of sand, 100 of carbonate of soda, 50 of carbonate of

lime, and 40 of bichromate of potash. The glass obtained from this mixture contains from six to seven per cent. of oxide of chromium, about half of which is combined with the glass, and the other half being free under the form of sparkling needles contained within the mass.

The jewellers who have already seen this new artificial aventurine, and tried it, have declared that it constitutes an important addition to their supply of imitation stones.

FACETIE.

A PRIVATE banker is every man who can lay his hand on his pocket, and speak of his cash-here.

"SAM, have you drove in 'em geese?" "Yes, sir."
"Did you count 'em?" "Yes, sir." "How many am ther?" "One." "All right, shut the gate."

An old lady declares that the only way a traveller can avoid being killed by railway collisions now-a-days, is always to take the other train.

"I AM going to the post-office, John; shall I inquire for you?"—"Well, yes, if you have a mind to, but I don't think you will find me there."

"FIGURES won't lie,"—consequently if any one tells you that a fashionable lady's figure is made up of cotton and things, don't believe it, if the figure says otherwise.

"TIM, does your mother ever whip you?" "No; but she does a precious sight worse, though."
"What's that?" "Why, she washes my face every morning."

An Irish coachman driving past some harvest-fields during summer, addressing a smart girl engaged in sheaving, exclaimed, "Arrah, me darling, I wish I was in gaol for stealing ye!"

A COMMITTEE-MAN IN SCHOOL.

We have the following good one from an authentic source:—

A sub-committee of a school board, not a thousand miles from the city of Lynn, were examining a class in a primary school. One of the committee, to sharpen up their wits, propounded the following question:—

"If I had a mince pie, and should give two-twelfths to John, two-twelfths to Isaac, two-twelfths to Harry, and would keep half the pie myself, what would there be left?"

There was a profound study among the scholars, but finally one lad held up his hand as a signal that he was ready to answer.

"Well, sir, what would there be left? Speak up loud, so that all can hear," said the committee-man.

"The plate!" shouted the hopeful fellow.

The committee-man turned red in the face, while the other members roared aloud. The boy was excused from answering any more questions.

PRIORITY.—An old Scotch domestic gave a capital reason to his young master for his being allowed to do as he liked:—"Ye needna find fault wi' me, Maister Joes, I has been langer about the place than yerseel."

A GAME-KEEPER on a Scotch moor recently trapped a large fox, and finding it to all appearance dead, he removed it from the trap and threw it aside while he rebaited the trap, when, to his astonishment, the fox scampered off up the hill and escaped.

"WEN?" it do me good to go out into the country a little way?" inquired a hypochondriacal and troublesome lady patient of her physician the other day. "Yes, it will do both you and your friends good, and the farther you go the better."

EGGS-ACTLY.—A man boasted recently of having eaten forty-nine hard boiled eggs. "Why did you not eat one more and make an even fifty?" asks Sounds. "Humph! you want a man to make a hog of himself just for one egg?"

"SIR," said old Beeswax, "I hate the French. They are an artificial people, for they call every green field a *champ*; a disrespectful people, for they belittle their father as a *pere*, and stigmatize their mother as a *mere*; and a parsimonious people, for they consider one egg to be *un œuf*!"

THE ROC'S EGG.—The *Times* likens the vacant place in the Cabinet, the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, to the twenty-fourth window of the Palace of Aladdin, which could only be completed by the genius that had furnished the other twenty-three. There is another illustration in the same story which we cannot but think more apt. When the palace built of gold and silver, and with windows ornamented with a profusion of precious stones, is finished, Aladdin's wife, the Princess Badroulboudour, exhibits it to an old woman (an evil genius in disguise), who finds one thing wanting, a roc's egg suspended from the centre of the dome. The princess straight goes wild for a roc's egg. She never thinks of asking how

a roc's egg can add to the splendour of the hall, nor whether it can harmonize with walls of gold and silver and windows with lattices inlaid with precious stones. No, the old woman's criticism is accepted at once, and a roc's egg supposed to be indispensable, the one thing needful, without which all the rest would be valueless. Now, no matter what sort of Cabinet Lord Russell may furnish, there will always be an old woman of opinion that it is nothing without a roc's egg, and there will always, too, be people like the Princess Badroulboudour, carried away by the sinister suggestion of the *alam Fatima*. The question, even now is why Lord Russell is not prepared with a roc's egg, or whether he fancies he can meet Parliament without a roc's egg. The difficulty is certainly great, because rocs have either never existed at all, or ceased to exist, or to lay eggs, and we therefore think it extremely likely that the Cabinet will have to go without a roc's egg.

SOME years ago there were five publichouses in the Gallowtree Gate in Leicester, viz: The "Bear," the "Angel," the "Three Cups," the "Three Tuns," and the "White Horse." In opposition to the others, the host of the latter house had the following lines inscribed upon his sign:—

"My White Horse shall bite the 'Bear,
And make the 'Angel' dry;
He'll turn the 'Three Cups' upside down,
And drink the 'Three Tuns' dry."

A "SIDE JUDGE" in one of the country courts, in speaking of the important and honourable office he had held for several years, said the presiding judge never consulted him only on one question, and that was after listening to three or four windy pleas of an hour's length each, he turned to him and whispered, "Isn't this bench made of hard wood?" I told him, "I thought it was."

WHEN can a ship be said to be sensibly, imprudently, ridiculously, ambitiously, and boldly in love?—1st. Sensibly—when she is attached to a man of war. 2nd. Imprudently—when borne along by a great swell. 3rd. Ridiculously—when in the company of a small buoy. 4th. Ambitiously—when making up to a peer (pir.) 5th. Boldly—when running after a smack.

A SEAMAN.

A man once applied to be shipped before the mast. "Are you an able seaman or a green hand?" asked the shipping master.

"Why, no—not an able seaman, but yet not exactly a green hand. I have some knowledge of the water."

"Ever been a voyage?"

"No."

"Ever been on the river craft?"

"No."

"Well then, what do you know about the sea?"

"Why, I've tended a saw mill."

"How do you like the character of St. Paul?" asked a parson of his landlady one day. "Ah! he was a good, clever old soul, I know, for he once said, you know, that we must at what is set before us, and ask no questions, for conscience' sake. I always thought I should like him for a boarder."

THE proprietor of a cotton-mill put this notice on his factory-gate:—"No cigars or good-looking men admitted." In explanation he said—"The one will set a flame among my cotton, and t'other among the girls. I won't admit such dangerous things into my establishment. The risk is too great."

THE WILTSHIRE DIALECT.

The following dialogue actually took place, a short time since, between a visiting examiner and a pupil at a school near Salisbury:—

"Now, then, the first boy of the grammar class."

First Boy: Here I be, sir."

Examiner: "Well, my good boy, can you tell me what vowels are?"

First Boy: "Vowls, sir? ees, of course I can."

Examiner: "Tell me, then, what are vowels?"

First Boy: "Vowls, sir! why, *vowls* be chickens!"

A HARD CASE.—Grandfather: "You needn't tell me it broke itself! I have used it this rope for the last twenty years, and it never broke before! You and your mother want a pump, that's why the rope broke!"

TOM MOORE said to Sir Robert Peel, on looking at the picture of an Irish orator: "You can see the very quiver of his lips." "Yes," said Peel, "and the arrow coming out of it." Moore was telling this to one of his countrymen, who answered: "He meant *arrah* coming out of it."

A "SMART" DELUSION.—Of all the "smari" instances of Yankee ingenuity, perhaps the smartest is the trick played upon the authorities of New Brunswick after their recent offer of a bounty of three dollars for the snout of every bear killed within the

colony. A large number of snouts were brought in, chiefly by Indians; but in course of time it was discovered that most of the trophies were imitations only, cunningly manufactured of india-rubber and gutta-percha, by clever manipulators in the State of Maine, who sold them to the Indians at half a dollar each. The profit of the trick was handsome, but as the Blue Noses (New Brunswickers) have long boasted they could not be outwitted, the snout-manufacturers are perhaps enjoying a satisfaction beyond that of mere pecuniary gain.

ONE of our men-of-war being at anchor in a tremendous gale, the ground broke, and so the ship began to drive. The lieutenant of the watch ran down to the cabin, awoke the captain from his sleep, and told him that the anchor had come home. "Well," said the captain, rubbing his eyes, "I think the anchor's perfectly right—who would stop out such a night as this?"

HOUDIN was invited to St. Cloud to explain the mystery of the cabinet of the Davenport immediately after they had given their *séance* before the emperor. His Majesty is said to have expressed his delight at the explanation by Houdin. All we can say is, if he is as easily satisfied with his Ministers' explanations of the mysteries of political Cabinets, his Majesty must be on the high road to wisdom.

A WELL-KNOWN wag about town accessed a reverend divine, an old friend and schoolfellow, of ghastly appearance, whom he had not met for many years, thus: "Well, Charley, I hope you take care of your soul now, old fellow." "Of course I do, my dear Fred. What makes you ask me?" replied the friend. "Why, to tell you the truth, your body is not worth caring for."

IN King William's time, a Mr. Tredenhams was taken before the Earl of Nottingham, on suspicion of having treasonable papers in his possession. "I am only a poet," said the captive, "and those papers are my roughly-sketched play." The earl, however, examined the papers, and then returned them, saying, "I have heard your statement and read your play, and as I can find no traces of a plot in either, you may go free."

WHAT A PITY.—An old Quaker lady was standing in a hairdresser's shop when a pretty young girl came in to engage a hairdresser for the evening. She gave her order hurriedly, saying that she wanted half a dozen "rolls" and a "butterfly" on the top, a "Grecian" or "waterfall" at the back, with plenty of "puffs" and "curls," and ended with an injunction to send any quantity of "mice" and "cateracts." "Poor child!" said the dear old lady, compassionately, looking after her as she left, "what a pity she has lost her mind!"

A TENNESSEE pardon-seeker gives the following description of how he obtained his pardon:—"Had a personal interview with the chief magistrate, and asked him for a small pardon if he had any more left. Chief magistrate wanted to know what position I held in the rebel army. The answer was faint, somewhat hesitating, and somewhat shaky. I said, 'Quarter-master.' Chief magistrate chuckled, and turned his head to conceal a sardonic smile. 'My ancient and venerable friend,' he said, 'if you think that your department of the rebellion endangered the Union cause, your innocence is a pardon in itself.'"

COLONEL —, who resides in town, lately hired a man-servant, whose appearance, conduct, and knowledge of his business were perfectly delightful. The Colonel fancied he had found a treasure, and valued it accordingly. One day the man came to him—"Sir, I'm very sorry I must leave you." "Why?" replied the Colonel, somewhat surprised. "There is no help for it, sir, I must." "Certainly, if you choose," replied the Colonel; "but have you no reason?" "Well, the fact is, though quite satisfied with my place, I have made a rule never to stay with any gentleman who lives in a hired house, with hired furniture."

"SOAPY SAM."—A good story, which we fancy is new, is being told in clerical circles, about the Bishop of Oxford. It is said that, when the bishop was travelling eastwards, to attend the Church Congress at Norwich, a lady who was sitting opposite to him commented, in flattering terms, on the eloquence and ability of the great Anglican divine, quite unconscious that she was addressing him. "But why, sir," she added, "do people call him Soapy Sam?" "Well, madam," replied the bishop, "I suppose it is because he has always been in a good deal of hot water, and always manages to come out, with clean hands."

WHAT SAYS SIR CHARLES WOOD?—The newspaper understood to represent Mr. Bright signifies that it would be a becoming thing to appoint him Secretary for India. Certainly Birmingham supplied the Indians with guns, and now supplies them with gods—good commercial reasons, both, for handing India to the member for Birmingham. And we know none better.—*Fun.*

O LARD! O LARD!—The British Tradesman is always equal to the situation. The Cattle-Panic came. Up started the butcher, and up started the prices. At the present moment Paterfamilias is paying Carnifex at least five-and-twenty per cent. too much. But we get something thrown in. We are frightfully humbugged, into the bargain.—*Punch.*

GROUNDLESS ALARM.

Adventurous Husband: "I'm off to the Crystal Palace; and, by-the-bye, I shall very likely go up in Mr. Glashwell's balloon. But pray don't be in the least alarmed! There's no real danger!"

Affectionate Wife: "How nice! Shall you be home to dinner, love?"

Disinterested Mother-in-law: "Charming! But tell me, Richard, will it not invalidate your life assurance?"—*Punch.*

A DIFFICULT COMMISSION.

Laura: "Now don't forget, Charley, to ask Captain Clatter for his photograph. He's promised it so often. But the poor man has got no head at all."

Charley: "Then, he won't have the face to refuse."—*Fun.*

A HINT TO MAMMAS IN GARRISON TOWNS.

Brother Frank (on impertinent little Cornet of Canada, legation): "Hullo, Mother, I see you've been advertising again for the girls."

Mamma: "What do you mean, Frank?"

Frank (reads newspaper): "Why, look here. 'Officers supplied with the best description of barrack furniture, warranted superior quality, very portable, and lower in price than hitherto for these articles. N.B.—The stock must be got rid of.'—*Fun.*

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO TAKE SHELL FROM FRESH PAINT.—Let tube of water be placed in the newly painted room, near the window, and an ounce of vitriolic acid put into the water: in a few days this water will absorb and retain the effluvia from the paint, but the tube should be once or twice renewed with a fresh supply of water.

MR. JAMES BRUCE states that he has discovered a method of liberating oxygen gas in the stomach, which he considers will prove very beneficial in the treatment of cholera, fevers, dysentery, bronchitis, consumption, asthma, and vertigo, as well as epilepsy. He directs a drachm of nitric acid (the acid may be increased to two drachms) to be diluted with a quart of water, and which quantity is to be taken in the twenty-four hours; but previous to drinking any dose of this acid mixture, the patient is required to swallow a lump, or two, of sugar. The result is the evolution of oxygen gas in the stomach. Mr. Bruce advises a trial of it in the cattle plague.

COPPER can kill and copper can cure. We recently noticed Dr. Burg's visit to Toulon for the purpose of testing his copper theory in cholera cases, and we now state the results obtained with his system by Dr. Lisie, physician to the Asile at Marseilles. The formula employed was:—A solution of 5 per cent. of sulphate of copper in pure water, 150 gms.; Sydenham's laudanum, 10 drops; sugar and water, 120 gms.; one teaspoonful every quarter of an hour in dangerous cases. The results were—out of 82 patients, 7 deaths and 25 cures. There were besides in the same establishment 36 patients treated with other methods; of these, 28 died and 8 recovered.

A NEW REMEDY FOR NEURALGIA.—Dr. Caminatti, of Messina, appears to have discovered a valuable remedy for certain neuralgic pains. A lady, a patient of his, had long been suffering from trifacial neuralgia; she could not bear to look at luminous objects, her eyes were constantly watering, and she was in constant pain. Disasters, preparations of Belladonna, hypodermic of morphia, friction with the tincture of acetate of morphia and camphor, subcarbonate of iron, &c., had been employed with but partial success, or none whatever. At length Dr. Caminatti, attributing the obstinacy of the affection to the variations of temperature so frequent in Sicily, hit upon the plan of covering all the painful parts with a coating of collodion containing hydrochlorate of morphia in the proportion of thirty grammes of the former to one of the latter. The attempt was perfectly successful; the relief was instantaneous and permanent, and the coating fell off of itself in the course of a day or two.

THE condition of the Thames is a matter of keen anxiety to the Londoners. They were delighted, the other day, to hear of a basket of fish being taken just opposite the House of Commons—not in the streets—and they are full of wonder at the purity of the great river to hear that a porpoise, a fine plump specimen, has been to be caught off Hammermith for several days past. He lingers in that locality, and has broken

through nets and escaped boat-hooks and amateur harpoons innumerable. The idea is that he relies on the water much, but it may be that he intends to stop in that retreat of Cockneydom, being afraid to venture back through the floating mud, through which he escaped upwards.

HEART'S-EASE.

SOMETIME, when summer warmly glows,
And sweet flowers bloom and fruits increase,
I cull, from every plant that grows,
In gardens musical with bees,
Or fields where zephyr gently blows—
And only miss this one, Heart's-ease.

Then, seeking for the flower I miss,
I careless grow of those I hold;
Their sighs distress as serpents hiss—
I let them fall—they are so cold!
Though quick to melt into a kiss,
If selfish heart were also bold.

Alone and poor, without this flower—
Resolving all wants into one—
Still longer seems the passing hour,
Self shorter seeming when 'tis gone;
I find it not in field or bowser,
This modest bloom, this choicest one.

And, dropping down amid the grass,
Where little eyes so strangely peep,
And wandering zephyrs, curious, pass—
My weariness too great for sleep—
I list sweet Nature's solemn mass,
And gaze into the sky's blue deep.

But still that little flower, Heart's-ease,
Grows not anear on either side;
Then, sinking down, the thought will please,
"Nor flowers for thee on earth abide;"
And in the upper, far, blue seas,
A little flower seems glorified. G. J.

G.E.M.S.

In friendship, as in love, we are often happier in our ignorance than in our knowledge.

Do not speak anything which you would not like to have repeated to-morrow.

WHEN you hear the phrase, "I may say without vanity," you may be sure some characteristic vanity will follow in the same breath.

PATIENCE is good, but perseverance is better. While the former stands as a stoic under difficulties, the latter whips them out of the ring.

WHEN the idea of pleasure strikes your imagination, make a just computation between the duration of the pleasure and that of the repentance that is likely to follow it.

NOTHING teaches patience like a garden. You may go round and watch the opening bud from day to day; but it takes its own time, and you cannot urge it on faster than it will. All the best results of a garden, like those of life, are slowly but regularly progressive.

CHILDHOOD.—Hard must be the heart, and selfish the mind which is not softened and expanded by communion with sweet infancy. The innocence of childhood is the tenderest, and not the least potent remonstrance against the vices and errors of grown man, if he would but listen to the lesson and take it to his heart.

LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE.—It is better to tread the path of life cheerfully, skipping lightly over all the obstacles in the way, rather than sit down and lament your hard fate. The cheerful man's life will spin out longer than that of a man who is continually sad and desponding. If distress comes upon us, dejection and despair will not afford relief. The best thing to do when evil comes upon us is not lamentation, but action; not to sit and suffer, but to rise and make a vigorous effort to seek a remedy.

MARBLE AND OTHER MINERALS IN YORKSHIRE.—It is being made known that a gentleman, named Whithead, who resides in Harrogate, has for the past two years been investigating portions of the hills and valleys which lie within an area of fifteen or twenty miles from the little village of Loftthouse to the Wenside mountains on the north-west, and the range of mountains on the north-east. The result of his investigations, it is stated, has been the discovery that the entire district is rich in mineral treasures. Beds of Eacrinite grey, black, and other marbles have been found to lie to the extent of 30 ft. in thickness, and covering an area of about ten square miles; they are within three feet of the surface, and so abundant and exposed are they that the rocky channel of the River

Steane is composed of marble. The river is choked with huge blocks of that material, and its precipitous marble sides, which are polished by the rushing winter floods, are filled with Eacrinites and other fossils, which peer out in countless myriads along the solid marble faces of the cliffs which hedge in the river. Not only is marble to be had in almost unlimited quantity, but the district is rich in ordinary limestone, in freestone, in lead ore, in ironstone, and in coal. Every appliance required for the purpose of the most extensive commerce exists in that locality, and all that are required are capital and enterprise sufficient to develop the wonderful resources of the hills and dales of Nidderdale, in order to make a hitherto unfrequented and lonely valley one of the busiest scenes of commercial industry in the world.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ADVICES from Russia state that the winter is very early there.

THE next Mayor of Winchester will be the 682nd that has presided over that city. The first Mayor of Winchester was Florence de Lunn.

THE cow eats 276 plants and rejects 218; the goat, 449 and 126; the sheep, 387 and 341; the horse, 282 and 212; the hog, 72 and 171.

THE National Gallery has acquired a new picture, which is ascribed to Memline. It is divided into two compartments, and represents St. John the Baptist and St. Lawrence.

ONE good Havana cigar is found by Dr. Richardson to yield, when its smoke is condensed, a sufficient amount of poisonous matter to induce active convulsions in a rabbit, and six pipes of common shag tobacco will yield sufficient poison to destroy a rabbit in three minutes.

At Vichy, a new church has been built at the expense of the Emperor. It is in the twelfth-century style, and some fine stained glass forms its chief ornament. The windows in the chancel contain the figures of the patron saints of the Imperial Family—namely, Saints Napoleon, Louis, Hortensia, and Eugenia.

A GREAT lottery is spoken of in Paris for the benefit of the sufferers by the cholera. It is proposed to raise 4,000,000 francs by the sale of tickets, of which 2,000,000 francs should be distributed in charity, 1,500,000 francs in prizes, and the balance of 500,000 francs it is calculated shall be absorbed in carrying the idea into execution.

WHY THE ATLANTIC CABLE FAILED.—Major Mahan, in a speech at the Fenian meeting in Worcester, United States, on the 3rd ult., intimated that a Fenian on board the Great Eastern purposely damaged the cable, because he was determined that infernals should not have the use of the cable until Irish independence is achieved.

A LARGE seizure was made in Paris a few days ago of wines which had been introduced into Paris at a low duty as vinegar, and then, being treated with sugar and sugar of lead, converted by means of a powerful forcing-pump and carbonic acid gas into champagne. It is asserted by respectable wine merchants that this wine, which is from the environs of Paris, does not, when converted into champagne, cost more than six sous a bottle to make.

ARAB PROVERBS.

HE who has never hunted, nor loved, nor trembled at the sound of music, nor sought after the perfume of flowers—do not say that he is a man. Say that he is a donkey.

Remember that princes have the caprices of children, and the claws of lions.

She sent word to me, "You sleep, and we are separated." I replied, "Yes; but it is to rest my eyes after the tears they have shed."

He who greedily seeks honours and riches may be compared to a man suffering with thirst which he tries to quench with the water of the sea. The more he drinks, the more he wants to drink, till at last he dies of drinking it.

Never despise counsels, from whatever quarter they reach you. Remember that the pearl is keenly sought for, in spite of the coarse shell which envelops it.

The vizier may be compared to a man mounted on a lion's back. People tremble as they see him pass; and he, more than any of them, is in terror of the creature he is riding.

When Allah has a mind to ruin the ant, he gives him wings. The insect, filled with joy and pride, takes his flight. A little bird passes, sees him, and snaps him up.

To kill, or to be killed, is the lot of man: the lot of women is to drag the lengthy folds of their garments along the ground.

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
THE BELLE OF THE SEASON	129	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	159
BEITOMARIE, THE MAN-HATER	132	HEART'S-EASE	159
THE HEROINE OF MONTGATE	136	GEMS	159
THE STRANGER'S SECRET	137	MISCELLANEOUS	159
THE GREAT SWEET CHEST-NUT TREES OF MOUNT EYNA	140		
THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL	141		
EVA ASHLEY	143		
THE FORESTER	145		
DON ERIQUE'S WOODS	147		
ARAB THE WITTY	149		
HOW JOTOMIE WAS TAKEN	152		
PRESERVE OF MIND	153		
A WINTER IN ITALY	154		
MAUD	155		
STATISTICS	156		
SCIENCE	157		
FACETIE	158		

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JUVENIA.—To neither of your inquiries can we reply.

Mrs. W.—We must beg to refer you to the notice at foot of this page.

HUNTER.—We know no better means of obtaining your object than by advertising.

TOM BASTOL.—The communication should be forwarded to *The Times*.

ANNE P. S.—We cannot communicate the address of the medical practitioner in question, which is unknown to us.

O. A.—A master can require an apprentice, on expiration of his indentures, to make up for lost time during the period of apprenticeship.

A.—There is nothing occult in the matter; you have only to forward a matrimonial communication, and it will be inserted.

LIZZIE ANNIE.—The marriage may be lawfully contracted in the name by which the person has been always known. The handwriting needs practice.

M. A.—The sovereign of these realms, whether king or queen, could not marry a subject, by virtue of the provisions of the Royal Marriage Act.

H. G. A.—A master cannot, after becoming bankrupt, retain the indentures of an apprentice nor "turn him over" to another master. Bankruptcy dissolves the obligation.

T. H.—The question respecting Mackintoshes has not been stated with sufficient clearness; (but see reply to "Aquarius.")

ANNE OF SHREWSBURY.—Glycerine is not injurious to the skin; eighteen is not too young an age at which to marry; and the handwriting is tolerably good.

A. S.—Old postage stamps are of no use whatever; the collection of them being merely a personal whim of the collector.

W. B. S.—Your handwriting is good for your age, and would do very well for the entering clerk in a merchant's office.

CHARLES T.—We could not possibly insert your communication in the shape in which you forward it; amend the form, and we will find space for it.

T. H. L. L.—We cannot possibly depart from our rule, as laid down at foot of this page (to which we beg to refer you), in regard to literary communications.

J. C. J.—There should be rightly a comma placed between the words "wide, wide world;" the first two words being separate adjectives, and the latter of them designed to intensify the first.

DISAPPOINTED ONE.—There is a possibility of obtaining a divorce by suing *in forma pauperis*; but you must have other grounds (such as infidelity) besides desertion, on which to rest your suit. See also reply to "J. A. H."

G. W. wishes to exchange *cartes de visite* and correspond with a respectable and domesticated young person with a view to matrimony. Has a good business and would make a devoted husband.

A WIDOW LADY. thirty-four years of age, desires to correspond matrimonially with an elderly gentleman of respectability and good income. She is fair, good looking, very affectionate and domesticated.

MILDEED. who states plainly that she is rather "plain," would be glad to initiate a matrimonial correspondence and exchange *cartes* with a gentleman, who must be tall, and in good circumstances.

LADY ADELA.—Fresh animal and vegetable food, and a liberal use of ripe fruits and lemon juice, together with the avoidance of cold and damp, are very good remedies for scurvy.

A. P., a gentleman of good family, and eighteen years of age, is anxious to meet with a young lady of about seventeen, who would correspond with him, with an ultimate view to marriage.

INCIGNITA.—"What is love?" Why we could write any number of essays in reply to your question; but we can now only briefly answer in the words of a poet who knew something of it, that rightly understood, love is "The only bliss that has survived the Fall."

NEURO.—Avoiding excesses in diet, with attention to the general state of health, is both a preventative and a remedy for eruptions on the face. For a good recipe for strengthening the hair, see also answer to "Britomarte," in present number.

JULIAN M., a gentleman by birth and position, educated at Oxford, and of the Middle Temple, seeks the companionship of a loving wife. Is very dark in complexion; 5 ft 8 in. in height, with black hair and black hirsute facial adornments, well-proportioned in figure, and generally considered of tolerable personal attraction; in taste and manners elegant,

and in disposition manly and affectionate; and would like to be introduced either to an elegant young lady or to a widow in the prime of life, well educated, and of a loving, amiable disposition (and if possessing an income or fortune desirable), with a view to an early matrimonial alliance. (Would be very glad to correspond with "Lillie L.")

E. O., who is twenty-one years of age, 5 ft in height, with light hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, and considered nice looking, wishes to correspond with a respectable mechanic (an engineer preferred) tall and dark, not under twenty-five years of age, and of temperate habits.

AQUARIUS.—A good waterproofing composition may be made thus:—Lined oil, one pint; oil of turpentine or camphine, a quarter of a pint; Burgundy pitch, a quarter of a pound; yellow wax, a quarter of a pound. To be melted together in a gentle heat, and when required for use, warmed before a fire, and well rubbed into the material.

ANNIE, who is twenty-three years of age, tall, with a slender good figure, very dark hair and eyes, and is considered very good looking, is thoroughly domesticated, and very fond of music, wishes to correspond with a gentleman a few years older than herself, with a view to matrimony, and would make a good careful wife.

BEITOMARIE.—An excellent hair-wash may be made thus:—One ounce of borax, half an ounce of camphor, each ingredient powdered fine and dissolved in one quart of boiling water. Apply when cool, and at intervals. It will effectually cleanse, strengthen, and beautify the hair, preserve its colour, and prevent baldness.

EDWARD E., who is twenty-four years of age, tall, dark, and passably good looking, of a loving disposition, and very temperate habits, an engineer and draughtsman, would be happy to open a correspondence with some domesticated young lady of means and education; and suggests that "Emma H." might respond.

THE LESSON OF THE LEAVES.

Hanging on the branches,
Drooping in the shade,
Mark the autumn leaflets,
How they pine and fade!
Rustling as the storm-blast
Sweeps across the moor—
Driven by the whirlwind
To the cotter's door:
Dark and thick, and heavy,
With the dust of time,
Weary of existence,
List their wistful chime,
As the mournful cadence
Rings in human ears,
A never-ending moral
For the coming years;
That the parting, shivering
"Leave us, our course is run!
Death is now before us—
But, our work is done!"

Mrs. G. L. B.

MIRIAM AND WHEAT, two cousins, who are both eighteen years of age, rather above the medium height, with good figures, would be pleased to receive matrimonial proposals from two gentlemen. "Miriam" has dark hair and eyes, with a good complexion. "Wheat" is rather pale, with fair hair and blue eyes. Both have received a good English education.

TRUTH, a widower between thirty and forty years of age, a professional man with several children, and about £200 a year, well educated, tall, considered good-looking, very steady and fond of home, asks to be introduced to and exchange *cartes* with a lady about thirty years of age, of middle height, dark, pleasing in appearance, domesticated, and of Church principles, and also possessed of some income.

BONA FIDES.—A young gentleman of good and respectable position, and who has been in practice for a few years as a Scotch solicitor, wishes to correspond matrimonially with a young lady, who must have a taste for music, and would make a loving and affectionate wife. She must also be religiously disposed, and possess some means. (Would be glad to hear from "Emmeline," "Louise," or "M. F.")

BESSY AND AMELIA wish to correspond and exchange *cartes* with two gentlemen, with a view to matrimony. The former is twenty-four years of age, of medium height, with dark hair and eyes, and fair complexion, and is very good looking. "Amelia" is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft 4 in. in height, with golden hair, and dark blue eyes, and is thoroughly domesticated.

LILLIAN DOWNER, who is twenty years of age, tall, of very blonde complexion, with large blue eyes, a profusion of the fashionable-coloured hair, very musical, thoroughly domesticated, of good family and birth, highly educated, and with a fortune in perspective, is willing to receive a matrimonial offer from a gentleman who is highly educated, handsome, of dark complexion, and of military appearance.

LUCY, EDITH AND BLANCHE would be glad to correspond matrimonially with three gentlemen of good property, who must be tall and gentlemanly. "Lucy" is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft 4 in. in height, has dark brown hair and blue eyes. "Edith" is nineteen years of age, 5 ft 2 in. in height, has light brown hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion. "Blanche" is eighteen years of age, tall, dark and graceful, and of music and singing; each will have an income of £200 a year, and all are thoroughly domesticated.

J. A. H.—A poor person desirous of suing for a divorce *in forma pauperis*, must first obtain the opinion of a counsel that there are reasonable grounds for a divorce; and must thereupon apply to the Judge of the Divorce Court, producing counsel's opinion, and an affidavit as to all the material facts, and that the applicant is not worth £25 beyond what is required after payment of debts. The Judge will then assign attorney and counsel, and order the suit to proceed; the poor person so suing being exempt from all fees, whether successful or not.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

TRY would like to see the *carte* of "T. D.," which should she approve, she will be happy to open a matrimonial correspondence.

BRENNETS has no objection to correspond with "P. B. M." Is of a good family, domesticated, and possesses a moderate share of good looks, with common sense.

LANCLOUT is anxious to communicate with "Rose P.," with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-four years of age, and of

fair complexion; is well connected, has a salary of nearly 300l. per annum, is considered tolerably good looking, and is good tempered, animated, and of musical and domestic tastes.

JESSIE MAY would be pleased to hear further from "Solus."

W. H. W. will be happy to correspond with "Louise," with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-one years of age, 5 ft 7 in. in height, is very respectably connected, very good tempered, and considered good looking.

THE SISTERS BAUSWIRE would like to correspond matrimonially with "Albert" and "Henry." Ages respectively eighteen and twenty; are considered very good looking; height, 5 ft 2 in. and 5 ft 4 in.; domesticated and musical.

FACLINE thinks she is just the person "Frederick" wishes for. Is tall and fair, with hazel eyes, is the daughter of a highly respectable tradesman in a prosperous business, and good expectations.

LORELY GEORGE would be most happy to correspond with "Emily H." Is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft 6 in. in height, has dark hair, dark grey eyes, and dark complexion; is steady and fond of home.

G. M. N. would be pleased to hear further from and exchange *cartes*, &c., with "P. P." Is twenty-one years of age, 5 ft 7 in. in height, of light complexion, and very fond of intellectual pursuits.

BONA FIDES, who is a Cornagian, would be happy to correspond with "Emilie." Is twenty-two years of age, rather tall, good looking, and passionately fond of music; has an income of 200l. a year, beside his profession. *Cartes* exchanged as a matrimonial preliminary.

LORELY AND ANNIE think "Albert" and "Henry" would just suit them. They are both thoroughly domesticated, and would make good and loving wives. "Louise" is twenty years of age, 5 ft 2 in. in height; "Annie" eighteen years of age, and 5 ft 1 in. in height, both being fair.

J. A. presents his compliments to "Emma H." He will be glad of an opportunity of communicating, and exchange *cartes de visite*, with a view to a matrimonial engagement. Is twenty-five years of age, with dark eyes and hair, and is very fond of home.

W. H. wishes to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with "Louise." Is twenty-six years of age, 5 ft 10 in. in height, of fair complexion, with brown hair, whiskers, and moustache, respectably connected, and possessed of a little money.

G. O. T. will gladly exchange *cartes de visite* and enter into a matrimonial correspondence with "Emma H.," being weary of so-called "single blessedness." Is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft in height, good looking, and very fond of home enjoyments.

VIOLKT would like to correspond with "Frederick," with a view to a matrimonial engagement. Is seventeen years of age, and considered; propensities; is accomplished, and possesses independent means. An exchange of *cartes de visite* desirable.

BOSS OR ENGLAND thinks that she will just suit "T. D." (No. 138). Is twenty years of age, 5 ft 9 in. in height, of light complexion, with brown curly hair, fond of music, and thoroughly domesticated. *Cartes de visite* might be exchanged as a preliminary.

H. B., a lady twenty-six years of age, who has dark hair and eyes, is very amiable, not very tall, possesses a good business, and is domesticated, would be most happy to correspond and exchange *cartes*, with a view to matrimony, with "S. E. M."

J. J. S., who is twenty-five years of age, 5 ft 9 in. in height, of dark complexion, with dark brown hair, and hazel eyes, and is well educated, would feel great pleasure in corresponding with "Emma H.," with a view to a matrimonial engagement.

FIDES would much like to hear more of "Veritas," who must be, she thinks, a gentleman. "Fides" is a rather lively, ladylike and well-formed brunette, not a beauty, but not considered plain, and will be pleased to exchange *cartes de visite* as a preliminary to a *bona fide* matrimonial correspondence.

F. W. R. thinks he possesses all the qualities specified by "Emma," with whom accordingly he will be happy to open communication. Is twenty-six years of age, of dark complexion, about the middle height, and holds a Government appointment. *Cartes* to be exchanged as a preliminary.

SEBASTIA wishes to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Annette," with a view to matrimony. Is twenty-five years of age, 5 ft 6 in. in height, with brown hair and whiskers; is highly respectable, very good looking, possesses a sound English education, and holds a Government appointment, with fair prospects.

CHARLES B. being much attracted by the frank and pleasing description given by "Susanah D.," begs to offer himself for her acceptance. Is twenty-five years of age, 5 ft 10 in. in height, of fair complexion, with dark brown hair; is good looking, well connected, educated, and has an income of 200l. a year.

FELIX would be very happy to hear from "Lulu" or "Ethel," or any other young lady not more than twenty-one years of age, who is of an amiable disposition, dark, and of medium height. "Felix" is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft 8 in. in height, of fair complexion, kind in disposition, and has an income of 200l. per annum.

V. L. would like to correspond with "Ella." Is forty years of age, passably good looking, has travelled largely and read extensively, possesses a cultivated taste, has a thorough knowledge of the world, and entertains religious principles. Is well connected, has an income of 400l. per annum, and has a nicely-furnished house.

PART XXX., FOR NOVEMBER, IS NOW READY. Price 6d.

* * * Now Ready, Vol. V. of THE LONDON READER. Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. V. Price ONE PENNY.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER."

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts: As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Printed and Published for the Proprietors, at 331, Strand, by J. E. GILDOX.